HM

THE HARD MUSIC MAGAZINE

Kids In The Way
Eisley
Still Remains
Bad Brains
Paramore
Flee The Seen [Poster]
Thousand Foot Krutch
Special Flip Double Cover Issue

TIM LAMBESIS of
AS I LAY DYING

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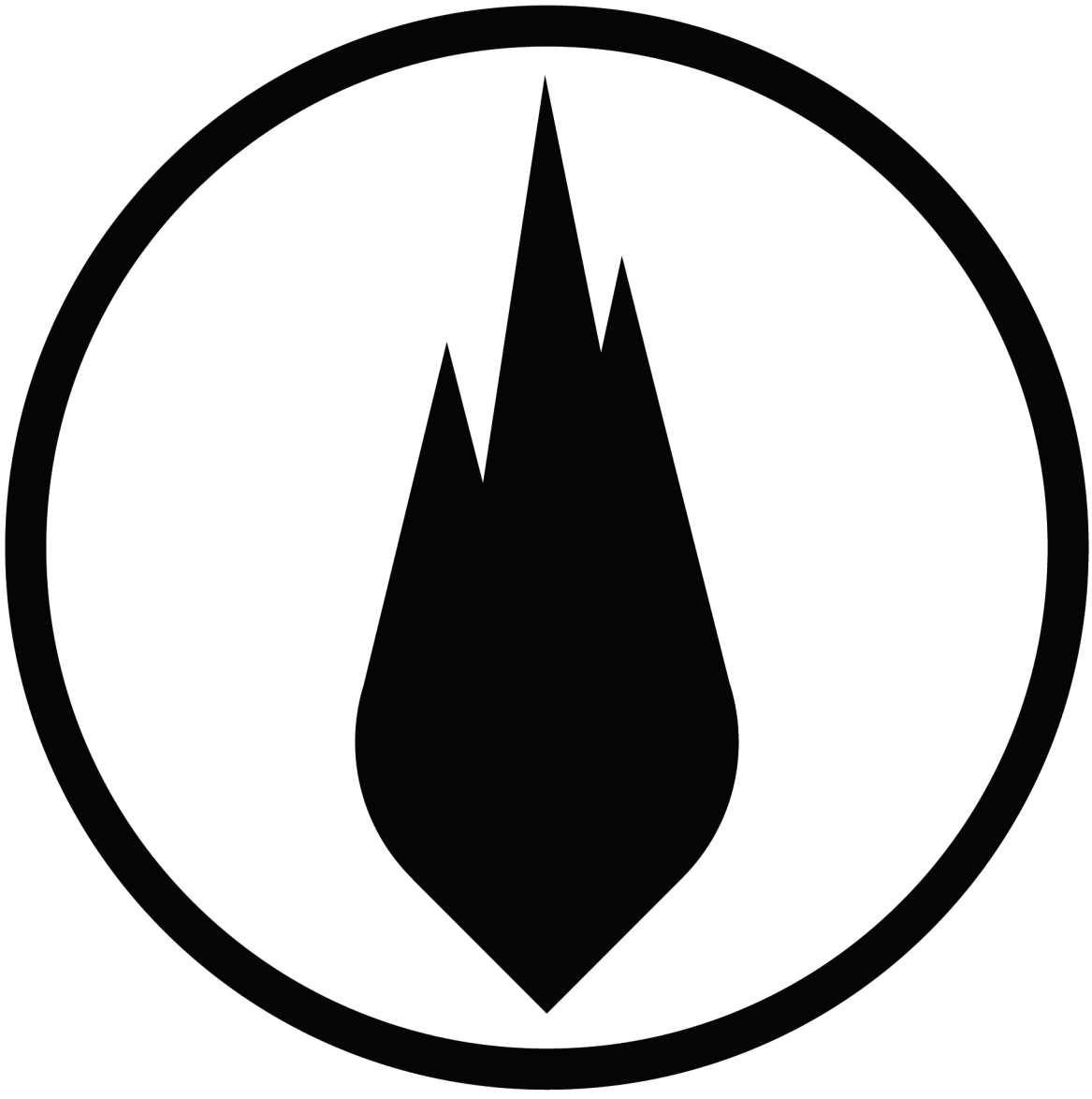

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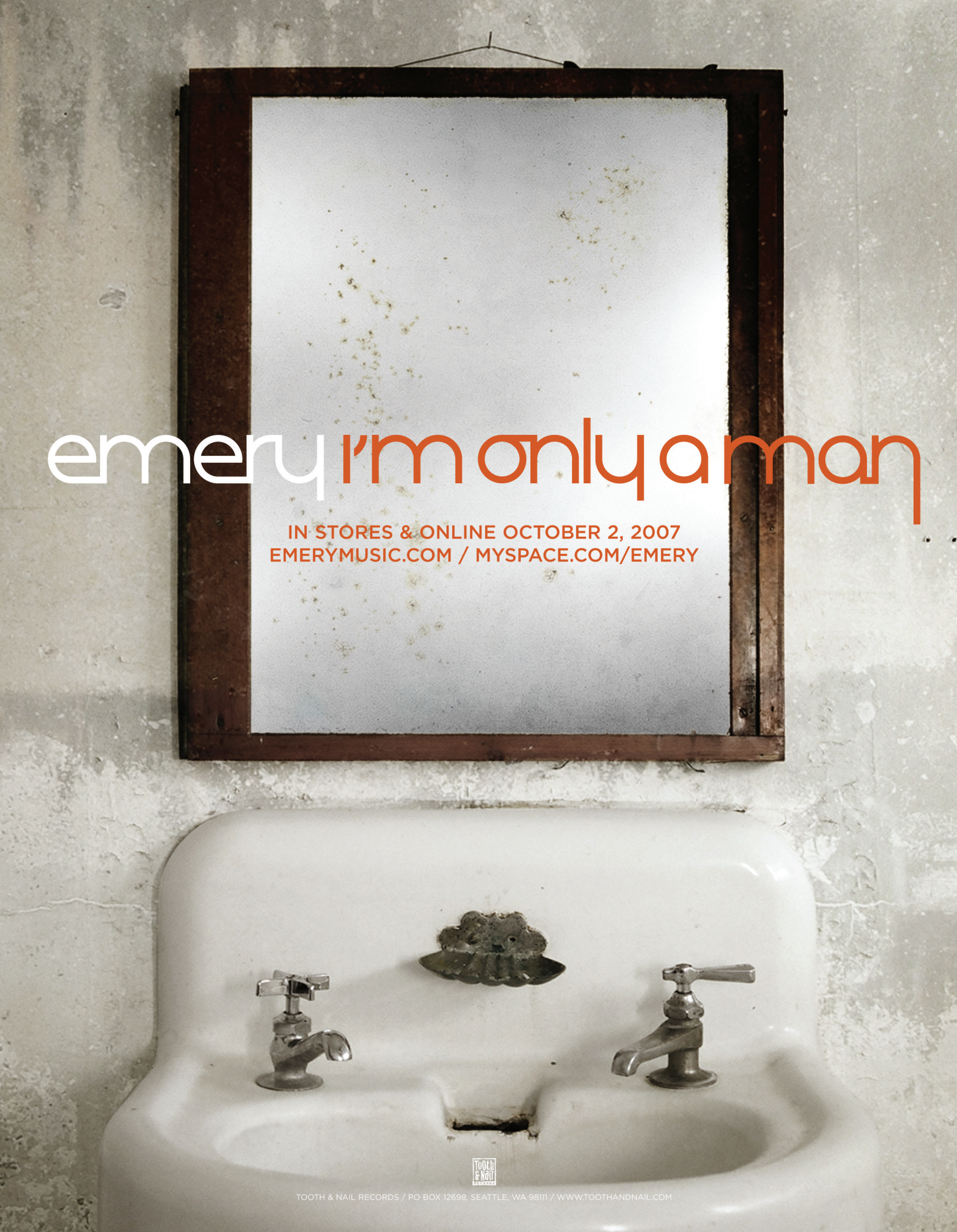
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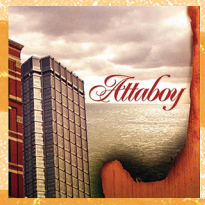

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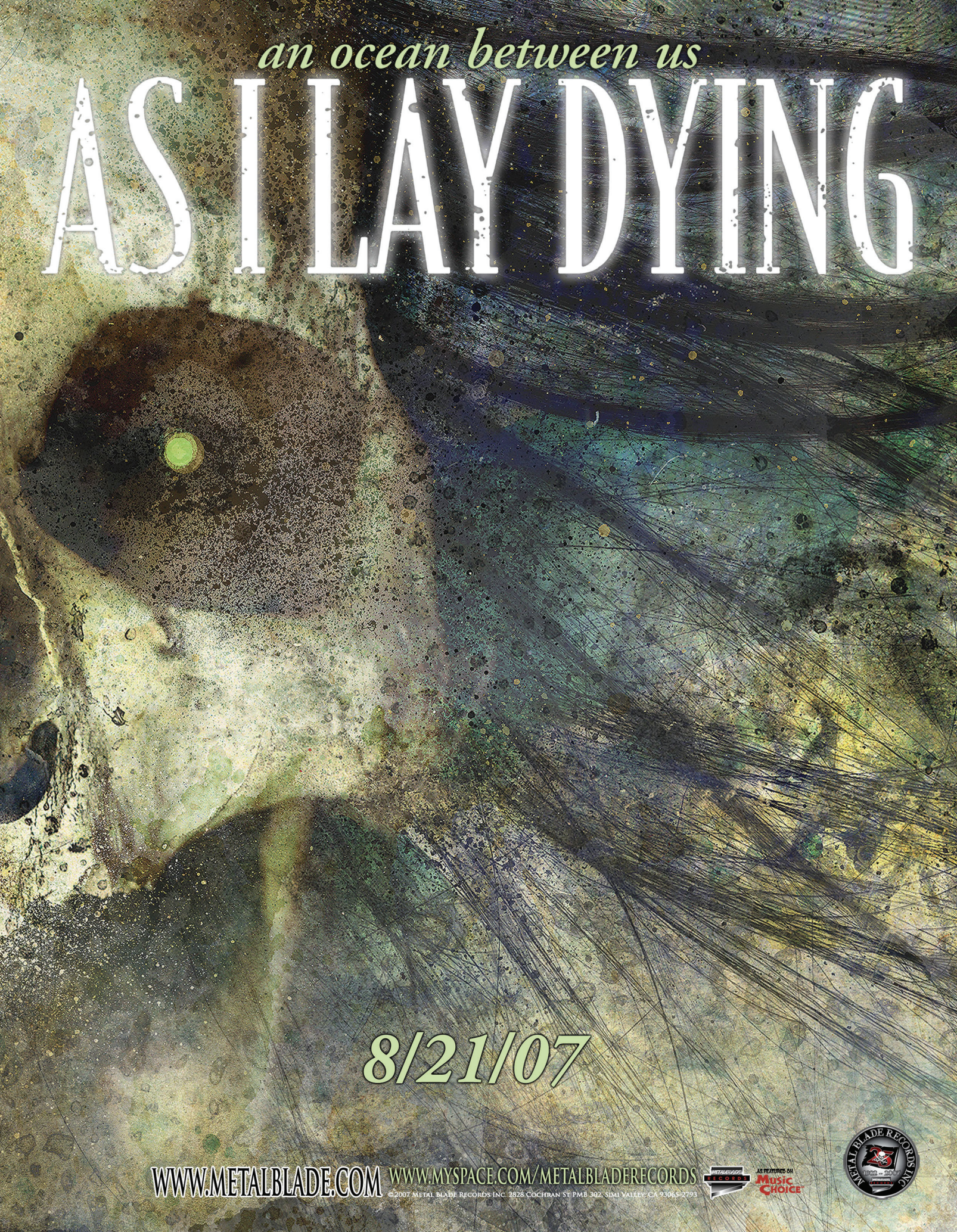
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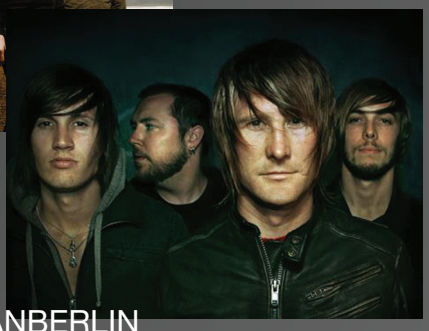

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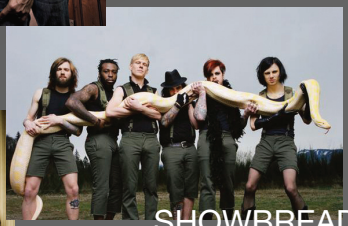

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From the editor

Doug Van Pelt

SUMMER ONLY COMES ONCE A YEAR

It's amazing how fast time flies. As an older rocker, I have to warn ya – as you age, each day, week, month or year becomes a smaller percentage of your life. What I mean is: when you are ten years old, one year is a tenth of your life. When you're 25 years old, a year is only 4% of your life. The perspective we experience time with is constantly getting smaller – leading to a sense that time is passing quicker. Oh well, I didn't mean to get all science on ya. I just wanted to say, "I hope you had a great summer!"

We had a great summer premium for subscribers this summer, which you can still get (if you subscribe or renew your subscription now): it's a "digital sampler," or download card with 17 credits for great songs by Project 86, BTA, Kekal, The Devil Wears Prada, These 5 Down, The Showdown, and nine more. Hopefully, you'll hear about it everywhere.

Oh, I hope this special double "flip" cover doesn't confuse you. If it does, let me know about it! Oh, and while I'm on the subject of confusion... We failed to get the passwords out with the last online/digital issue, as promised. Many apologies. If you are a subscriber and you have not received your username & password for the online/digital editions, please send me an email (at dvanpelt@hmmag.com).

Next time you visit hmmag.com, consider leaving a comment on an article/review/blog you liked (or disliked). If you're going back to school, why not make September 14 "Leave a copy of HM Magazine at school (or work) day." If you'd like to get involved in other such fun street team type stuff, give us a shout.

SPINNING AT HM NOW

URBAN D	*Unorthodox*	From the heart and a rad DVD to boot.
TYPE O NEGATIVE	*Dead Again*	All for a future article research, I assure you.
V/A	*Hearts Bleed Passion*	Volume 2 with lots of cool indie bands.
AS I LAY DYING	*An Ocean Between Us*	Six advance cuts we can't help but love.
THE DEVIL WEARS...	*Plagues*	Blown away ... just before deadline.
WAR OF AGES	*Fire From The Tomb*	These songs were worth the re-recording effort.
OVER THE RHINE	*The Trumpet Child*	Linford & Karin make great music together.

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HARDNEWS
Quick & concise

MICHAEL SWEET
"STRYPER VOCALIST FRONTS BOSTON

August 19th's "Come Together" will celebrate the life of Brad Delp at The Bank of America Pavilion in Boston, MA. Stryper's Michael Sweet has been chosen as one of the few musicians who will perform with the legendary classic rock band that night. Delp, the voice of Boston since 1969, died in his home on March 9, 2007. "Brad Delp will always be revered as one of the greatest vocalists in rock-n-roll history. I am humbled to share the stage with Tom Sholtz and the members of Boston in a tribute to such an incredible singer", says Sweet. The lineup also includes: Godsmack, Beatlejuice, Farrenheit with guests Mickey Thomas, Sammy Hagar, and more. It has been confirmed that Sweet will perform at least 2 to 3 songs as lead vocalist for Boston. Ironically, it was another Bostonian, Gary Cherone, that wowed the audience fronting Queen for the '92 Freddie Mercury Tribute Concert at Wembley.

STAVESACRE
FUTURE NOT SO CERTAIN

As anyone that's been visiting their myspace page will know, the Stavesacre saga has had some serious on-again/off-again drama. The latest bit of news posted, however, seems to indicate another burst of life within the band:

"Writing is underway for the next Stavesacre record," posts drummer Sam West, "with our long lost Jeff Bellew back in the fold. We are sifting through and recording demos of all the ideas right now, and hope to be recording the album by summer. Look for us to get out and play some shows after the project is finished."

The band also posts that it's working on a documentary of the band, spanning its long career.

Disciple re-releases *Scars Remain*

Scars Remain Special Edition will release on August 28 with four additional acoustic tracks ("Love Hate," "My Hell," "Things Left Unsaid" and "After the World"), two music videos and a free ring tone. The *Scars Remain Tour* will follow, including Fireflight, Dizmas and Wavorly. The exclusive video content will feature videos for "Scars Remain" and "After the World." Their single, "After the World," received lots of Christian radio airplay in multiple formats (Rock, CHR, and even AC). "Game On" has also received massive placement in sports shows across the country, including *Best Damn Sports Show*, NFL's *Total Axxess*, WWE's *Cyber Sunday* and Speed TV's *Speed Report*. The single was also used in promotion for *Criminal Minds* and *CSI Miami*. To make the song even more widespread, when recording the song, vocalist Kevin Young laid down bonus tracks for each professional sports team. Listeners to the HM Magazine Podcast might've heard the homage to the Chicago Bears last January.

News bullets

Pivitplex has released a new single, "Hope Killed the Shadows," inspired by *The Dead Whisper On*, the latest release by suspense author T.L. Hines.

Nodes of Ranvier will be releasing their new record, *Defined by Struggle*, at the end of July. They will play a few shows with From First to Last at the end of July; then they will be heading out with for the HM Magazine sponsored tour with **Inhale Exhale** all of August.

The Devil Wears Prada will accompany Chiodos along with **Alesana**, Pierce The Veil, Simcoe Street Mob, and Underminded on *The I'm A Mathlete Not An Athlete Tour* this fall.

Rise Records has announced the signing of **Burden Of A Day**, **For The Fallen Dreams** and **American Me**.

The **Flyleaf** song "I'm So Sick" appeared in the motion picture, *Live Free, Or Die Hard* this summer.

Ironclad will be re-releasing **Aletheian**'s 2005 Hope Prevails Productions release *Dying Vine*. The re-release will also include an additional track and will be out this fall. Both IronClad Recordings and Aletheian have agreed that *Dying Vine* is too strong of an album to remain buried in obscurity forever. Both the band and label hope to use it as a springboard from which to launch a new future for the band. Aletheian promises fans a new release in late 2008.

Bombworks Records has acquired the rights to release the demos from Indonesian cult underground black metal band **Bealiah**. Originally released on a series of cassettes, most of the original copies never left the Asian continent, and outside of 1 song that appeared on a compilation, none of the songs have ever appeared on CD before. *Anthology of the Undead* will collect 13 songs from the Bealiah demos onto 1 CD, completely re-mastered for maximum brutality. Bealiah will be released worldwide September 11, 2007.

August Burns Red

BY TIM HALLILA

August Burns Red had one simple goal in mind, says guitarist J.B. Brubaker, the band's elder statesman at just 23, "We just wanted to make a really awesome metal record." Sounds simple enough, but achieving something truly "awesome" in an oversaturated genre is no easy task. Even still, ABR's new album *Messengers* is awesome and then some. These young fresh-faced twentysomethings often take the stage clad in cargo shorts and sandals, but somehow manage to assault the audience with the technical precision and focused brutality worthy of a bunch of long-bearded, Viking-dressed Scandinavians.

Talk a little bit about your new album, *Messengers*. What does the title mean, and is there an overall lyrical theme?
Each of us wrote some lyrics, and we all brought them to the table, and then decided which lyrics worked with a particular song. There isn't really one overall theme, since we all brought our own ideas to the table. We wanted a more open-ended title that would kind of reflect that group effort.

How do you feel you've grown since your first album: musically, in songwriting, personally, spiritually or otherwise?
I think we've all become better musicians since touring in support of our first record; because, on tour, you're around your instrument all the time. There is always time to practice during down time, so I think we're all able to do more difficult things instrumentally than we could before. And then, just from touring and playing so many shows, I think we've really become better as a unit as well. As far as personal growth, spending so much time together has really brought us closer, and I think we all know each other better, but we really have to give each other space when needed. Also, we're a lot more comfortable talking to kids about our faith and what we believe, and we've had a lot of opportunities to talk to people.

What has it been like to be a faith-based band touring in places where people may not agree with what you believe?
It's been an awesome experience. We definitely feel the need to watch how we act, because we know that people are watching us. We know we're an influence to kids that listen to us and come to our shows, so there's definitely a need to behave responsibly.

Have you caught any flack from more conservative leaning Christians who say that Christians shouldn't be playing such a brutal, heavy, angry kind of music? If so, how do you respond to them?
We have had stuff like that happen, just comments on our message boards or different things like that. I always just say that there's no such thing as Christian music, only Christian lyrics. There's no religion in music, it just is what it is. I don't think there's a particular sound that is evil. It's about what message you are choosing to put with our music. I would encourage people to read our lyrics and see what we're about, and maybe be a little more open-minded about things.

What does the next year or so hold for you guys? What things are you looking forward to the most?
We'll just be doing a ton of touring. We may go overseas for the first time. We are working on putting together some dates in Europe, and I can't wait for that.

Dance Gavin Dance will join Silverstein on the road in October.

Our Heart's Hero, the newest band to ink a deal with Gotee Records, is poised to unveil their self-titled debut on September 18th.

As Cities Burn will release *Come Now Sleep* August 14th.

Eddie Jones of **Radial Angel**, spoke to congress on behalf of Outboundmusic and SaveNetRadio about the upcoming vote to increase Internet radio royalties and against FCC and RIAA practices.

Mae's third album, ***Singularity***, will be released on Capitol Records August 14. This will be the band's first album for a major label following two records with Tooth & Nail.

Tiebreaker (aka John LaMonica) is presenting A Minor Miracle out this summer on Doll House. According to the Rocky Mountain News, Sir Benjamin Slade, an English aristocrat with a lavish 13th century mansion that boasts three lakes, a ballroom and hundreds of cattle – but lacks one key feature: an heir. After an 18-month search for a relative to inherit his $15 million home, Sir Benjamin Slade, a childless baronet, has found an unlikely candidate: Isaac Slade, frontman of **The Fray**. No word yet about Isaac's decision.

Fifty-Three Five Records released the original demo recordings of legendary Christian metal band **Stryper**, or Roxx Regime (as they were known in 1983). The CD known as *The Roxx Regime Demos*, contains no overdubs or re-recordings, and includes the original version of the MTV and Billboard hit song "Honestly."

Pillar will enter the studio on July 13 to begin recording their 5th full-length release. What's it going to sound like this time around? "...a 747 jet airliner crashing into your bedroom in the middle of the night," as Pillar puts it.

HARDNEWS
Page t-welve

Enough Already!

BY JAMIE LEE RAKE

If his '06 career-spanning compilation left you hungry for all of **T BONE BURNETT**'s '80s Warner Brothers material on CD, rejoice for the verbosely-titled *Proof Through The Night* & *The Complete Trap Door*. [Rhino Handmade]

On this gathering of one album, two EP's and a bonus track, the man more recently commercially viable for producing of others' work delivers some of his most biblically informed and profound work. And for all his last solo outing's sonic innovation, Burnett was arguably dipping more richly from his melodic wellspring here. But with a limited pressing of 5,000, time is of the essence for you to imbibe, too. [RhinoHandmade.com]

Why is godly bluegrasser **RICKY SKAGGS** singing a salaciously goofy Rick James dusty? The mandolin virtuoso's just having wry fun with piano popster pal BRUCE HORNSBY on the tunefully artful *Ricky Skaggs & Bruce Hornsby* (Legacy). The cross-pollination of Skaggs' Southern rootsiness with Hornsby's jazzy Americana lite rock is a slice of acoustic music heaven rich as pecan pie. And yes, they perform more serious, even gospelly, songs beyond the aforementioned punk-funk remake.

You familiar with England's '80s-'90s Christian rock underground may recall The Free Zone and their leader, Tim Thwaites. Thwaites' current band, **RADIUM 88**, aims far beyond the evangelighetto. He calls what his current act does "indi alternative sci-fi trip-hop" and on the group's eighth CD, *Only Science can tell us the Truth* (Lotek), he about has that right. The additions of melodica, string orchestration and piano to the synths and Jema Davies' ethereal vocals nearly make a body want to organize a rave just to play this in the chill-out room. [Radium88.net]

Maybe the gals of **PRELUDE** will hate the comparison, but they remind me of a younger, artsier Point Of Grace. That's not hatin', as I've use for the POGsters' soccer mom inspo-pop. But with Michael Omartian producing and his daughter Amanda joining other famed musicians' offspring in the trio on *Learn To Fly* (TrackStar), Prelude has its own mostly enjoyable thang. Only would the lyrics be consistently meaty as their sonic surroundings and harmonic sensibilities. Am loving their fashion sense, too. And don't confuse them with the vocal group who had a pop hit with a Neil Young song in '74. [PreludeTrio.com]

And if this installment wasn't schizoid enough for you, send more music by believers that will please and surprise me to: P.O. Box 29, Waupun, WI 53963-0029 U.S.A., and see what I write about it next time. Blessings, fans and fiends!

News bullets

Seattle-based BEC Recordings has announced the signing of best-selling, Dove Award-winning artist/producer/composer, **Bebo Norman**. Norman is scheduled to release his next studio project in spring 2008.

Skillet will open for mainstream rockers Breaking Benjamin and Three Days Grace for over 20 dates in September/October.

The Afters are slated to release their highly-anticipated sophomore project on December 26, with *Never Going Back to Ok*.

Means hits the road in Canada with Misery Signals, Shai Hulud, The Human Abstract, and Straight Reads The Line from August 9 to Sept 7.

Open Grave Records Recording artist **Feast Eternal** have completed the recording of, *With Fire*, their follow up to 2000's, *Prisons of Flesh* (recently reissued on Open Grave Records). *With Fire* is set for a September 23rd release date.

Adding his guitar playing to the new **David Crowder** album is none other than the Motor City Madman, **Ted Nugent**.

Leeland Mooring, the vocalist and chief songwriter for **Leeland**, married **Michael W. Smith**'s daughter, **Whitney**.

Inked In Blood's new album *Sometimes We Are Beautiful* is on its way. Says Trump of the new album: "We were really inspired by Further Seems Forever for much of the songwriting on this record. The hooks are founded on addictive melodies and sing-able choruses; in fact the entire album is rooted firmly in the tradition of 'evolving hardcore,' where the energy, intelligence and beauty of a band's sound reflect the current state of the scene. We are entering the next level of impacting others with heavy music."

Maylene's "Dry The River" video, which fits right into their current motif, debuted on *Headbanger's Ball* a couple weeks ago. They'll be on tour with Underoath and Every Time I Die in Sept. and Oct.

Hard News cont'd on page 17

LIVE REPORT

Cornerstone Festival 2007
June 26-30

BY AMANDA CURTIS

BUSHNELL, IL – Welcome to Cornerstone Festival 2007. It was as hot as ever, until it rained ... making the grounds a muddy mess, then quickly warming-up again, allowing dust to attack everything and everyone. Generator stages are already popping up before the festival even begins and tent villages lace the grounds as everyone sets up camp and porta-potties are still fairly sanitary. The Psalters kicked off the festival with Worship at the Beach. You didn't have to venture far to hear the out of the ordinary music that is uniquely The Psalters.

Highly anticipated **As Cities Burn** pulled off an impressive set. Since losing their screamer, guitarist Cody steps it up to do vocals. Although the band receives criticism for their sound change, **Cody** and the rest of the band definitely prove they can still put on a no-less-entertaining show and the added melodic harmonies played nicely. ACB rid any doubt by confirming they can still rock old favorites like "Love At Our Throats." The next afternoon they played again, this time all new material preview from new album, *Come Now Sleep*, dropping in August. Through the changes, ACB is creating something very personal and relatable. Cody appeared very passionate and emotionally involved in the music.

Flatfoot 56 is a band you can count on for a good time, every time. Even if you aren't particularly a fan of Celtic punk, one can't help but get caught up in their engaging performances. Covering old classics and distinctive Flatfoot 56 material alike, it all definitely makes one of the most "fun" shows at Cornerstone.

The Devil Wears Prada played a midnight set and brought a more polished sound this year. Their increased popularity made for an extremely packed Encore 1 Stage – one of the best turnouts of the fest. The entire tent was overflowing, with people standing shoulder-to-shoulder, with even more standing feet outside the tent, trying to catch a glimpse. The band was exceedingly energetic, the frontman kept throwing himself down on the stage and the drummer kept standing up, balancing himself on his bass drum and stool, waving his drumsticks in the air.

Homer Hiccolm & The Rocket Boys, an ambient indie band from Abilene, Texas played a faultless set, they nailed every harmony. The Rocket Boys had a disadvantage by playing during Anberlin, but nonetheless had a decent turn out, and an marvelous set.

A pleasant surprise by the name of, **Dignan** from

McAllen, Texas plays music worth knowing about. This charming band includes the likes of male and female vocals, violin, guitar and keyboard. Other instruments added layers and evoked curiosity like the trumpet, accordion, glockenspiel, bells, and trombone. The last song ended with the band inviting audience members on stage to sing and play various instruments; passed around lit sparklers and everyone danced until the end.

Saturday night was dubbed hardcore night at Main Stage. **August Burns Red** took the place of Maylene & the Sons of Disaster, who was unable to attend. ABR sounded great and owned the stage; they definitely stepped up the challenge with their best efforts. Next up, **Emery** played a disappointing performance; **Toby** kept going out of key. **Norma Jean** was highly entertaining; they had six light pillars that coordinated with their music and a film playing old-fashioned clips behind them during their set. **Underoath** sounded great and played great, a balanced mixture from *They're Only Chasing Safety* and *Define The Great Line*.

Gillespie added extra fills and vocals to their songs in a good way. Spencer spoke gracefully about how God has kept the band together.

Sounds like another great week at Cornerstone, there's just nowhere else you can see so many great bands in one place, and that's only a portion of them. Despite living in a tent without a real shower for a week, we're ready to do it again.

Clockwise from top: The Devil Wears Prada guitarist shows that ballet does help rock; Showbread's Josh Dies; The Showdown's David Bunton; and August Burns Red's Jake Luhrs [Photos: Kelly Benson] For more, see AC's "Intern Diary" & the "Editor's Blog" at hmmag.com

THOUSAND FOOT KRUTCH

BY STEVEN DOUGLAS LOSEY

Even his manager said, "You really shouldn't book time with this guy," says Thousand Foot Krutch mouthpiece Trevor McNevan, but the band needed a producer and Ken Andrews (Beck, Pete Yorn, Tenacious D) was who they wanted. Unfortunately, Andrews was in the midst of partying with Tommy Lee and not at all concerned with studio dates. So the band settled into recording the album and that's when the stars seemed to align. "We only had a small window to work with," McNevan says. "We had already been through a couple producers and had taken time off the road, but in the eleventh hour we were suddenly able to get Ken."

So began the journey for Thousand Foot Krutch. Their latest opus, *The Flame in All of Us*, has the band feeling confident and Trevor McNevan feeling ready to tell the world about a new sound and a new-found freedom. "There wasn't any fear going in a new direction and trying new things," McNevan recalls. "It's easy to over-think things in the studio, but with Ken at the helm there wasn't any hesitation and it was all very natural for us."

So from the first note to the last, Thousand Foot Krutch infused some direction into the new music with clarity and passion. They went for different feels and different vibes, they tried new things musically. "We've always wanted to work with a string section and an orchestra," McNevan chimes. "Stevie Black was coming from a session with Elton John and we sat down with him. Hearing those elements in the studio was a powerful experience and something I'd never experienced."

It wasn't only new perspective that inspired the band's sound, but it was actually having three months to record the album as well. "In the past, we never had more than two weeks to lay down the tracks," McNevan said. "This time, however, we had three months, which took the whole process up another level."

Over the band's ten year career, they have sprinkled rap-rock, alternative, and modern rock melodies throughout their sound, all while weaving a certain texture and thread through each disc. "Lately I've been feeling like this record is the first step in a new direction for this band," McNevan states. "I think we purposefully tied in what we've done in the past while still reinventing ourselves in a lot of ways."

While strings and orchestras are meshed with big choruses and epic musical interludes, the band's MO seems to have blossomed into something with a grander scheme. "There's a lot of different connections that this record makes with people as a whole," McNevan recounts. "I feel like they can see our hearts in it and the honesty we come from. It also begs a lot of questions like, 'Who am I and why am I here?'"

Why they're here, who they are? Those are big questions for a band that threw up their "Rawkfist" and told people to "Move." Thousand Foot Krutch has come full circle to a place that they've always strived for with a record that delivers heft both lyrically and thematically. "*The Flame in All of Us* is really about common threads between people and human nature," McNevan says. "It's about connecting people and the details in the grand scheme of things. It's about taking a lot of steps outside of the box and speaking to people about what He's trying to say".

thousandfootkrutch.com

Goodbye yellow brick road

MICHAEL D.R.I.V.E.

FORMERLY- MIKE LEE

YOU KNOW HIM AS THE VOICE OF:

BARREN CROSS

Grammy Award Winner; Paul Buckmaster says;

"Michael Drive is a skilled and talented singer/songwriter, who crafts powerful and inspired songs. He is also an experienced and competent instrumentalist and producer; in the studio as when actually writing the material. Very well produced and very interesting sounding! In his lyrics, Michael is Driven by a desire for truth, and his music reflects that."

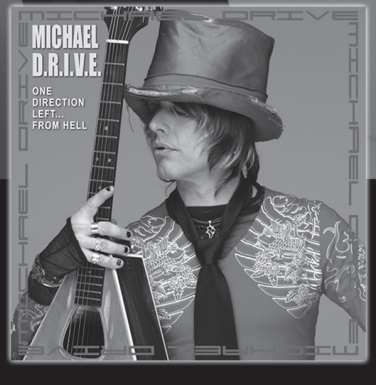
Emmy Award Winner; Larry Brown says;

"Strong songs, unique voice, and great playing. Michael Drive is always on my "go-to" list when I'm picking songs for films that I'm scoring."

Rock Star; Chi Coltrane says;

"Usually in the case of a rock band, if you take away the band and just leave the singer with the guitar, it's not very impressive; but in Drive's case, it's completely different. If you were to take away the band, you would see that he shines; like a multi-faceted diamond. His voice is unique... his musicianship, and his songwriting are excellent."

Hear the songs for yourself.



THE LONG AWAITED

NEW ALBUM

"ONE DIRECTION LEFT... FROM HELL"

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Still Remains
A PERSISTENT TOPIC
BY JENN SMITH

NOT MANY BANDS CAN SAY THEY HAVE BEEN ATTACKED BY FROGS DURING A SHOW, BUT THE GUYS FROM STILL REMAINS CAN. "WE WERE OUT ON TOUR WITH THROWDOWN AND THE RED CHORD AND WE WERE SITTING IN THE BASEMENT TALKING WITH GREG [WEEKS], THE BASS PLAYER [FROM THE RED CHORD]. AND HE ASKED US A WEIRD QUESTION LIKE, 'HOW WOULD YOU FEEL IF YOU WERE ATTACKED BY FROGS WHILE YOU WERE PLAYING?'

"And we were like, 'Uh, that's kind of a weird question…' we were like, 'Uh, it probably wouldn't bother us at all.' So then later that night he hopped up on stage and I think he had a bunch of frog gummies, and he just started throwing them at us while we were playing."

I recently had the opportunity to chat on the phone with Still Remains' front man TJ Miller about their upcoming album, along with a variety of other topics. The topic that was discussed the most was Still Remains' place in the music scene as all of them being followers of Christ individually, but not as a band whose music has the sole purpose to minister.

Titled *The Serpent*, their newest album was named after what TJ thinks is the root of all of humanity's inadequacies: "I felt like the ultimate situation where mankind kind of failed was in the very beginning with the serpent and the garden," says TJ, "And I think that the serpent played a big role in the things that happened in my life that I wrote about in the album." TJ explains that the album's inspiration is from his past, as early as his childhood – the influences that have shaped him into the person he is today. But written in a way that people can take what he writes as however they want to. He also says that issues of pain, suffering and failure are exuded in the upcoming album. "It's a very honest album musically and lyrically," says TJ.

Compared to their last album, *Of Love and Lunacy*, he told me that *The Serpent* has in a way accelerated. "The songs are more emotional. If you take a lot of the heavy stuff we did in the last record... I think at times there is even heavier and faster [music] with this album." When I asked him just what the song "Anemia In Your Sheets" exactly was about, he told me: "It's a very violent song and it is about killing someone in their sleep – taking revenge on someone while they're sleeping. And the song kind of paints a picture of a crime scene. It kind of goes from being in the crime scene to the killer's perspective of how he felt after he did what he did."

Still Remains also has done some band member interchanging since their last album. But that obviously didn't interfere with their progress. "Still Remains has been a band that's had constant member changes. So it's really no surprise. Jordan and I started the band together and him and I are the guys that are still here. It's not even really that big of a deal, I don't think. As long as he and I are writing, I think Still Remains will always sound like Still Remains. Not to say that the other guys don't put in a lot, because they do. But as far as new members go, we just got a new keyboard player named Ben Shauland and a new bass player named Steve Hetland and they're both awesome dudes. We're really excited to have them aboard."

Still Remains signed with Road Runner Records in 2005. I asked TJ what he thinks they gained while touring under *The Road Rage Tour* and he said, "Well, we were able to see a lot of the world we've never seen before. That tour took us to Europe and we had never been there before. Also it was the first tour we ever did on a bus, I think. That was, like, two years ago. We had to share our bus with our good friends in 3 Inches of Blood, we got to watch Trivium every night and in the States The Agony Scene was on tour as well. We made a lot of great friends and we learned a lot about touring. And we learned a lot about the world, I guess – places we like, places we don't like," says TJ.

In an issue of HM from about two years ago, as Still Remains was just signing with Roadrunner, TJ told HM that Still Remains wasn't "leaving" the Christian music scene, but sort of "branching out" from it. I asked him to sort of expand on that a little, to hear about what life for the band has been like since they signed with Roadrunner and henceforth "branching out" from the Christian music scene. "I just need to set the record straight: Everybody in Still Remains is a believer in Christ; we all take that very seriously," says TJ. "Sometimes it's hard, you know, like when you're on the road. We're all with our good friends and sometimes we lose sight of that, just like any other Christian does. We are not a 'Christian band' – the only reason I say that is every song that we write doesn't have to with faith. There are some, for sure." TJ began describing the tough spot the band is in because of their faith. "… A lot of kids ask, 'Are you a Christian band?' And then you tell them 'no' and then they will get all upset, like, 'Oh, I guess I can't listen to you, then.'" He then said that if they tell people (perhaps he was referring to non-believers) that some of their songs have to do with their faith then the listeners will just automatically be turned off from listening to their music. "I think a lot of Christians tend to do that as well. Like, 'Okay, not every song is about Christ. I'm not going to support this band anymore,' or, 'Oh, this guy's a Christian and I just heard him curse as he was walking around that corner and I'm going to tell my friends and then I'm going to have them all write Still Remains comments about how we're disappointed in them as people," said TJ.

The Still Remains members are all Christians, but they are not using music as their ministering medium. Referring to anyone at their shows, he said, "If they want to ask, 'Do you believe in Christ?' like, 'Can I pray with you?' Yeah, of course! We need prayer on the road! We need all the help we can get, and any encouragement is great. But am I going to stand up on the stage and preach my beliefs to everyone? No, I'm not going to."

Obviously, they don't feel as if their music is the medium through which they will tell people about Jesus; yet they are still willing to talk to anyone about Him who wants to. Despite outside pressures from people who all have different views about faith and music, Still Remains continues to do what they feel is right with their band.

✖

SLEEPWALKING IS SCARY FOR BOTH WALKER AND WATCHER ALIKE. IT'S JUST PLAIN SPOOKY TO SPY A PERSON WALKING IN THEIR SLEEP AND COMING YOUR WAY. SIMILARLY, SOMEONE CAN GET INTO A WORLD OF TROUBLE BY MIXING EXTENSIVE PEDOMETER MILES WITH FORTY (OR MORE) WINKS. IT'S FAR BETTER TO LOOK ALIVE AND STAY AWAKE.

Kids In The Way vocalist David Pelsue says his band's new *A Love Hate Masquerade* CD addresses "relationships, dealing with good and bad relationships. Dealing with loss in your life; life and death, things like that." To make these serious points, many of this CD's song titles – like "Your Dream" and "My Little Nightmare" – allude to dream states. But what's with the whole R.E.M. frequency, Kenneth, anyhow?
"I think a good metaphor for going through life is sleeping, I guess," Pelsue elaborates. "It's just the overall metaphor for simplifying life."

You'll notice immediately that Pelsue sings a whole lot more than he screams throughout this latest disc. But this is not just some fancy auditory mask he's wearing to the masquerade. Rather, he's evolving has an artist and Kids In The Way's sound is evolving right along with him. "I think between our last record, *Apparitions of a Melody*, and this record, we kind of went through some changes internally in the band," Pelsue explains. "We lost a guitar player [Austin Cobb] and we added a new bass player [Willie Bostic]. And honestly, the new bass player was a big influence; just his style of writing. He's really good at just writing simplified, pop-rock music. And that was something we kind of, as a band, were headed more towards naturally, anyway. When we did the re-release of *Apparitions of a Melody*, we wrote "Fiction" and "Getting Over Me" – that was the other song on that re-release – and that was kind of a bridge: We didn't really want to stray too far from the sound of *Apparitions of a Melody,* because those songs were going to be added and we didn't want them to stick out like soar thumbs. But we kinda knew, when writing those songs, we were making this transition towards music that's more accessible to more people. There's absolutely nothing wrong with screaming music or screamo or whatever you want to call it. But we kind of felt like we were definitely narrowing our audience and we felt like – as a band, and as writers, and as creators – we had more potential within us to create music that would be more accessible to a greater amount of people. So we kind of made that leap on this record to see how it goes."

Nevertheless, it's doubtful the band is changing its sound just to make itself more appealing to the Christian music community. *A Love Hate Masquerade* expresses strong values, mind you, but one would hardly call it an evangelistic work. "The goals of our music – just because it's the way we live our lives and philosophy behind our lifestyle – is to have our faith and to have what we believe, our spirituality, intertwined in that," Pelsue notes. "I think that's just a natural thing, just because that's how we live our lives. But I think the first and foremost goal with our music is to have as many people hear it once or twice and be really interested and want to hear it more."

"Sugar" is one such song that reflects this CD's masquerade-themed title. "It's just kind of a song written about how, in today's society, people kind of gauge how well people are put together by their exteriors. People tend to put on a good front and fool a lot of people and look like they have it together. But really, on the inside or internally, they may be a complete wreck on the edge of catastrophe."

If you listen to the sound of *A Love Hate Masquerade*, it's obvious this disc has significantly more pop elements than found on prior Kids In The Way efforts. But Pelsue's words are not always as pretty as his melodies. This approach reminds me of groups like The Cure. For instance, remember that act's sweetly melodic "Why Can't I Be You" hit? If your memory goes back to the '80s, you likely hummed along with it even the first time you heard it. But its lyric talks about a guy who hates himself so much, he wants to be somebody else. Self-hatred and assuming the personality of another, out of jealousy, are not exactly wholesome behaviors learned in kindergarten. While it's not all doom-and-gloom like The Cure, "Be My Little Nightmare" is one such moment, where Pelsue lets his edgy lyricism shine through over a hum-able melody.

"We were writing this more pop-sounding, straight up the middle rock and roll sounding record," Pelsue

Kids In The Way

HITTING THE SNOOZE BUTTON

BY DAN MACINTOSH

expounds. "But, as far as me lyrically, I just like to write… I wanted to keep my lyrics as close to the edge as possible, I guess. I didn't want to completely compromise the abstractness of the art to where it was just total bubblegum and butterflies, you know? In an instance like that, I tried to remain as tough as I possibly could [laughter] for lack of a better term. The song is speaking about … I think a lot of people, younger people especially, tend to find themselves in relationships – like boy/girl relationships – where they know it's not a healthy relationship, but due to nostalgia or comfort or whatever they stay in those relationships or continue those relationship far beyond the healthy boundary. So that song is kind of from the viewpoint of a person that is in that relationship and kind of realizes it and is saying, 'You know, this is not good. We're not a good match. But I'm going to continue to pursue this.'"

Sadly, today's young people aren't doing any better with relationships than their parents and grandparents did before them. Humans, to be blunt, are just stupid like that. It's the same way with drugs. How many rock stars need to OD on heroin, for instance, before everyone finally realizes that this deadly poison is not the key to endless creativity? Similarly, how many broken homes does it take to make men and women enter relationships and marriages more carefully?

"I think it's easier nowadays to find security in other things," Pelsue theorizes. "I think [it's because of] the way that society has built up so many different things as far as money and image and what is sexy and all that stuff. Even if we're raised knowing what's right and wrong, and what's good for us and what's bad for us, I think it's really easy to be fooled into a false sense of security if we're not getting that [security] from other places; from healthier places."

In a sense, when so-called Christian kids suffer through poorly chosen relationships and seek security in places outside of God's plan for their lives, it supports this disc's dark masquerade scenario. On the outside, they're supposedly living the Christian life. But deep inside, they're slavishly following the world's unhealthy prescriptions for happiness. Kids In The Way are trying to wake up those that are sleepwalking through their lives; those that are in a cruel masquerade party and may not even know it.

"I think a lot people live their lives that way," Pelsue concurs. "It's either the love masquerade or the hate masquerade. A lot of times, it's just that – it's a masquerade. It's not the real thing. The title [*A Love Hate Masquerade*] doesn't have a negative connotation. But it's not a glamorous title by any means. It's kind of like it's saying, 'Hey, everybody! Is this really how you want to live your life? Is this really how you want to wake up every day?'"

✖

RED CLOUD

RESERVATIONS, PLEASE...

BY DAN FRAZIER

If you ask the outspoken and highly animated hip-hop artist Red Cloud to show you around his hometown of Hawthorne, CA, the first place he'll take you to is a city park. He'll call you "homey" and walk you around this park named after the Native American athlete Jim Thorpe, while elders play chess and the picnic tables are booked with birthday parties. He'll show you youths wearing clothes of different solid colors that represent local gang chapters. And he'll even show you where, due to a rival gang fight, his head was once split open with a baseball bat. But the thing that he'll show you that'll sink in your mind is a faded brown door on the second floor corner of a nearby apartment building. While staring at the same view that at a young age would always make his eyes water, he points and says, "That's where it all started."

After graduating high school (the first in his family to do so) and forming the group Seventh Heaven Planets with the emcee Paranorml, Cloud became exposed to the Los Angeles hip-hop underground by participating in (and winning) emcee battles at weekly clubs. The progress also caught the eye of the San Diego-based Syntax Records, which released his albums, *Is This Thing On?* and *Traveling Circus* in 2001 and 2003 respectively.

Named after a tour that Cloud and the prominent emcee and producer Pigeon John completed together, *Hawthorne's Most Wanted* is Cloud's third and finest album to date. Covering a diverse array of themes that could not be more representative of Cloud's upbringing and mindset, the album gives

Born Henry Andrade (a name he now claims is obsolete except to the IRS), Cloud's birth mother was only 18 years old when she brought him home to that small studio apartment.

While dating Cloud's Mom, a young man noticed she would leave behind an infant in her apartment while they went on dates. Claiming the baby was her sister's and that she would come over to watch the child while they were absent, Cloud's mother was eventually forced to tell the truth, as Cloud was always still present and abandoned in the apartment after they returned. After convincing Cloud's mother to let his sister adopt her baby, this young man became Cloud's uncle (or "tio" in Spanish) and at the age of eight months, Cloud was inducted into an extensive family.

Located in the easternmost section of the area known in Los Angeles as the "South Bay," the city of Hawthorne is an urban playground of concrete and asphalt. Dissected by the construction of the 105 freeway in the 1980s, the city maintains certain rough areas that can be attested by Cloud as he gives me a tour down his local streets renown for drug deals, robberies, murders, and the corner street markets that act as battlefields between it all. "If you can't afford to live in the nearby beach towns, you live in Hawthorne," explains Cloud. "With being broke comes rough living. The thug life. The street life. It sucks, but it's survival mode for a lot of people out here."

During his 8th grade year on a day that Cloud had originally planned to skip in order to go tagging, a school assembly was held which featured performances by the hip-hop group LPG and a speaker named Mike Rayo. At this assembly, the students were exposed to parables through life stories and music encouraging a positive life without drugs or violence, but with faith. On Friday, April 24, 1992, Cloud attended the follow-up concert at the local church Del Aire Assembly of God and accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior. Two weeks later his decision to quit his gang required his peers to "jump" him out by brutally beating him. As he was being hit, Cloud could only think "I'm almost there. I'm almost free."

shout-outs to West Coast pride ("405"), personal experience ("Guns & Roses"), the recent death of his father ("Boulevard Knights"), and Cloud's most unique lyrical subject: indigenous pride.

Born to parents from indigenous tribes of Mexico (his mother: Huichol, his father: Chiapas), Cloud appeals to the often forgotten and neglected native peoples of Mexico, Canada, and the United States. "We're all brothers and sisters. I'm not anti-anything, unless it's anti-truth. I just have a big heart for indigenous peoples."

Using his music as education and promoting a positive lifestyle, Cloud acts on his word by touring with DJ Wise to the often remote and rural Native American reservations of North America. Having performed at nearly 65% of the reservations, Cloud hopes to reach them all by the time he is 33. He is now 28.

In addition, Cloud is also starting his own imprint label entitled Indian Ink – complete with a logo of a skull using the Mexican, Canadian, and American flags as the feathers of a war bonnet. The label will feature artists of indigenous descent such as Supaman (Crow), and Kaboose (Ojibwa), and Maiz (a Spanish-language collaboration of Red Cloud and Hawthorne hip-hop group The Crux).

Back in the grassy city park on that bright Sunday afternoon, four juveniles approached Cloud and praise him about how he recently spoke and performed at their school. Apparently, Cloud is taking the same positive inspirational approach of hope to the local youth that once inspired him and this also proves that he does not take for granted the kindness and outreach that he has received.

✖

BEATS

[hip-hop news 'n' reviews by SphereofHipHop. com]

News shorts…

A few artists (**Sev Statik**, **JustMe**, **Wonder Brown** and **Theory Hazit**) and ILLECT Recordings have teamed up to record and release a benefit project. Read on as JustMe explains the story of the Falling Tsar project:

"A year and a half ago, **Scribbling Idiots** hooked up with Sev Statik to begin work on an album. At the time, I had recently lost a dear friend of mine and wanted to dedicate the project to his memory. Eric Place was the first friend I made when I moved from California to Kentucky. He was a recovering alcoholic, devout Christian, husband, father, and musician. He spent the last few months of his life in pain, suffering from Fibromyalgia. He had to quit working, but the family braved through it until he passed away. Eric always wanted to name a band 'Falling Tsar,' thus *The Falling Tsar Project* was born.

"The other day I called Eric's widow Leslie to update her on the progress of the project and just check in with her. I was shocked when she told me that their eight year-old son Mason was diagnosed with bone cancer. Leslie was recently remarried to a Christian man and long time friend of Eric's, but he too was forced to quit work to be home with Mason. Leslie must support the family, all the while paying for Mason's medications and constant trips to the hospital for chemotherapy.

"In an attempt to help the family, S.I. and Illect Recordings will be donating all the proceeds from *The Falling Tsar Project* to help pay for Mason's medical expenses. We feel like God has given us an opportunity to use hip-hop to really make a difference.

"Just think of the difference we as a community can make in this situation! The CD is just a bonus! Ten tracks produced entirely by Scribbling Idiots. Sev, JustMe, Theory Hazit, and Wonder Brown lace their vocals with potent lyrics that touch on socially relevant subjects.

"Please help us by sharing this story with as many people as possible and buying multiple copies of *The Falling Tsar Project*."

Get more information on *The Falling Tsar Project* at both:
illect.com/fallingtsar
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Dark Tranquility and melodic elements of early Children Of Bodom

wintereich

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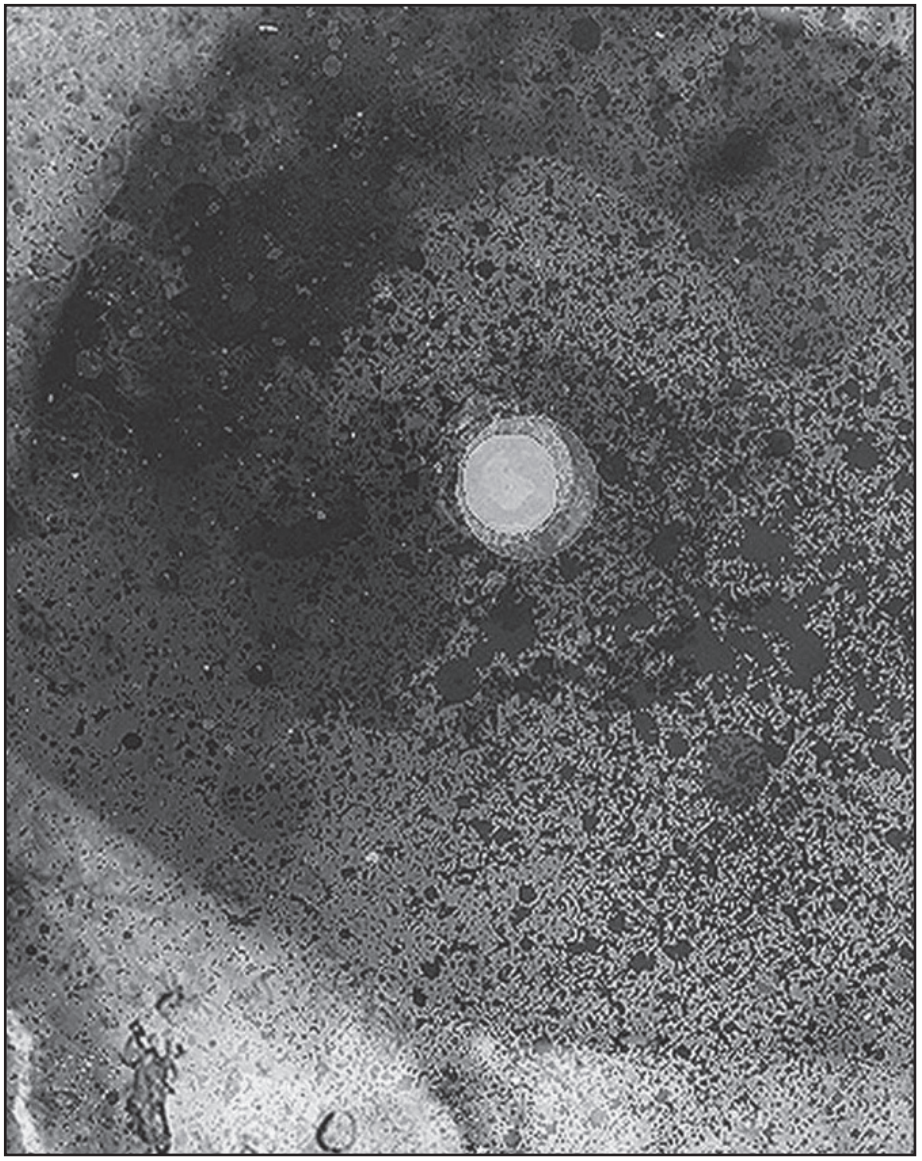
"NAILED. DEAD. RISEN" IN STORES SEPT. 4

Album reviews

23 ALBUMS ⁄ ENTERTAINMENT ⁄ BOOKS & GADGETS



AS I LAY DYING

AN OCEAN BETWEEN US

There's no doubt in my mind that As I Lay Dying has made a record in An Ocean Between Us that will cement them—as well as the record—as cornerstones in the history of metal music. I know. It's a lofty claim. It's certainly the best metal album this year, and I would even venture to say the last five years. And even if it's not the best record of the past five, 10, or even 20 years, time will show it will hold a place as essential listening for anyone who wants to play metal music.

From the start, As I Lay Dying has produced stellar music, catching the ears of everyone in lower California as the San Diego-based quintet release *Frail Words Collapse* sold over 200,000 copies. Their follow-up, a concept record called *Shadows Are Security*, landed them a gold mine: They were named San Diego Music Award's Band of the Year (over Jason Mraz and Switchfoot), named MTV2's 2006 Metal Gods, and landed a headlining spot on 2006's *Sounds of the Underground* tour, over heavyweights like GWAR, In Flames, and Cannibal Corpse.

It's a lot to live up to, and AILD managed to channel all their energy into this record, producing a heavy, technically sound, and ridiculously fast record that surpasses both of their previous releases. Many of the songs on the record showcase their musical ability, as well as their ability to create and piece together songs that make listeners grab hold—and then hold on for the entirety of the record. "Forsaken" takes bass drum hits to absurd levels before dropping into a melodic chorus that sets up an immediate breakdown that all but forces your head to bob up and down. "Within Destruction" is a throwback to old-school Pantera, with thrash riffs, quick breakdowns, and an extended interlude that ends with the fastest guitar playing and most in your face screams that a record could handle.

Do yourself a favor and pick this record up. ➡

Rating system

05 *CLASSIC*
04 *FABULOUS*
03 *SOLID*
02 *SUSPECT*
01 *AMISS*
***** *1/2*

It's everything you could ask for from a band that already has two previously acclaimed albums, notching the bar higher once again for themselves, as well as those within the genre. Key tracks: "Within Destruction", "The Sound of Truth." [METAL BLADE] DAVID STAGG

AUGUST BURNS RED

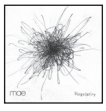
MESSENGERS

It's been two years since Lancaster, PA's August Burns Red released their crushing debut, *Thrill Seeker*. Since then they've kind of grown out their hair and it now shows if they forget to shave. Nevertheless their age or unapologetic bourgeois demeanor, these five suburban boys deliver a solid mark of technical metalcore with their latest release, *Messengers*. Super long and pummeling without forgiveness, the lyrically collaborative tracks consist of separately developed sections of breakneck shreds, epical breakdowns, pumping anthems, and the clockwork nanosecond pauses that glue them together. The intensity rarely lets you catch your breath; or as vocalist Jake Luhrs describes during one of his growls, "we are trying to breath underwater!" [SOLID STATE] DAN FRAZIER

AS CITIES BURN

COME NOW SLEEP

About a year ago, As Cities Burn was about to disband, but as a result of their fans' heartfelt response, they're still very much alive. But not without a few changes. Gone are the screams of former vocalist T.J. Bonnette; and guitarist Cody Bonnette, who supplied the clean vocals on ASB's debut, steps up to the mic full-time. There is less heaviness and fewer breakdowns this time, and the guitars lean toward meandering pick-work layered overtop of jagged riffs. Bonnette brings heaps of melancholic melody to the table, and his cleaner vocals even get a little rough around edges when necessary. It is a more focused effort, with screams being used sparingly and intelligently. The breakdowns found here are much more subtle and never lose sight of the melody. The only drawback is that several songs tend to run together a bit when heard consecutively, but on the whole, this album is a nice step forward. [TOOTH AND NAIL] TIM HALLILA



MAE

SINGULARITY

Flip-flop loving Virginia Beach natives Mae finally deliver their long overdue and highly anticipated third full-length, entitled *Singularity*. Their beloved last album, *The Everglow,* executed its songs with a children book concept complete with an elaborate illustration booklet and a female automaton voice giving instructions on how to experience the ultimate journey. While the new album lacks such an apparent theme, musically it could easily pass as a follow-up sequel – but this time you'll have to pick up the pace and discover when to turn the pages on your own. Songwriter and frontman Dave Elkins returns with his definitive melodic soars all introduced by the textured crescendo build-ups and high-spectrum keyboards that have evolved into the band's enduring trademark sound. However, perhaps in an attempt to prove maturing development, too many tracks inappropriately try to handle a slightly more mainstream radio-friendly heavy edge. But as a savior and not nearly often enough, Elkin always falls back to the soft pop persona that made you embrace these nice-guy rockers in the first place. Don't worry, the journey is far from over. Keep going.
[CAPITOL] DAN FRAZIER

THOUSAND FOOT KRUTCH

THE FLAME IN ALL OF US

As the discography develops for Thousand Foot Krutch, each album brings not only an impressive sonic progression, but substantial growth in their audience. After abandoning the rap/rock sound from their debut and coming into their own as a mainstream modern/hard rock act on *Phenomenon* and *The Art of Breaking*, TFK finds themselves back in the collective conscience with *The Flame In All Of Us*. And it's the perfect next step in the band's evolution. Masterfully walking the fine line between the melodic and the heavy, TFK displays the utmost sensitivity and awareness for their audience who hungers for both. The deeply personal "Wish You Well" strikes the same acoustic heartstring "Breathe You In" plucked on *The Art of Breaking*. "InHuman" continues the "Rawkfist" tradition, while "Learn to Breathe" serves as *Flame*'s highlight. It's a blended sound that keeps TFK poised as one of the top bands in their genre. [TOOTH & NAIL] MATT CONNER

EISLEY

COMBINATIONS

This lovable group from Tyler, Texas has probably done exactly what they needed to for their official sophomore full-length. Instead of extending those breathy, organic and swirling harmonies that are enough to make ambient rock band keyboardists envious to a ridiculous extremity, they've kept their trademark sounds in check in the best service of each song. And the songs are quite good. "Many Funerals" starts things off with a call and response vocal delivery that'll remind any fan why they love this band, with an almost psychedelic cadence that'll conjure memories of many a 60s audible flashback. "Ten Cent Blues" is another musical presentation of affectionate and informal story telling a la "Golly Sandra" from 2005's *Room Noises*. "Come Clean" has a great Sixpence vibe that begs for repeat listens. The tribal "A Sight To Behold" is probably the most wonderful song to come around since the disappearance of Fleming & John a few years ago. Lyrically, the words seem to capture the great uncertainty of pre-marital doubts and fears – honoring marriage with the wonder of it all. "Could I be possibly insane / to think you and I have life figured out / how does one approach this / when all our past loves have let us down ... let's paint the walls down and find how to live / cause you and I have so much to give." Without a throw-away song here, I swear, Eisley couldn't have done it better. [REPRISE] DOUG VAN PELT

NODES OF RANVIER

DEFINED BY STRUGGLE

True story. I once wanted to be in Nodes of Ranvier. That may be a strange admission, but maybe you can understand. I am from South Dakota. Freeman, South Dakota to be exact, but I was attending South Dakota State University in Brookings, SD which is about 50 miles north of Sioux Falls, SD (the nexus of all things Nodes) around the time the band was starting out. I was about 19 years old and just beginning to be interested in all things Chrindie. Nodes of Ranvier was the height of Chrindie in SD. Performing in low rent non-venues like the Knights of Columbus hall or just somebody's basement, Nodes was cool. They were the coolest kids in the youth group, that weren't in the youth group anymore. They did back flips while playing. They wore ties before

Ratings

	DV	Writer
As I Lay Dying *An Ocean Between Us*	04	05
August Burns Red *Messengers*	03*	04
As Cities Burn *Come Now Sleep*	04	03
Mae *Singularity*	03	04
Thousand Foot Krutch *The Flame In All Of Us*	03*	04
Eisley *Combinations*	04*	
Nodes Of Ranvier *Defined By Struggle*	04	01*
Still Remains *The Serpent*	04	
Silver Cities *Power And Strife*	02*	03
Blindside *The Black Rose EP*	03	03*
Spoken *S/T*	03	03*
High Flight Society *S/T*	03	03
Underoath *777 (DVD)*	02*	03*
Michelle Shocked *To Heaven U Ride*	03*	03*

Interpol ever did. They had tattoos. And of course, and most importantly, as I saw it, emo chics were always around them (or least that's how I perceived it, but in hindsight it was probably just one girl that liked the lead singer). But they certainly seemed to have that je ne sais quoi that gave them so much popularity in Sioux Falls and eventual mild success nationwide. Fast forward about 7 years to the modern day. Nodes has, in the time since, undergone lineup changes of Zao-like proportions and is now releasing their 4th album, this time on Victory Records instead of Facedown. I no longer want to be in Nodes of Ranvier. My tastes and views have changed. As for whether Nodes is still inspiring young Midwesterns to join bands, I can't say. Their newest disc, *Defined by Struggle* is, disappointingly, their weakest to date as it treads too heavily on certain well-worn metal paths and contains none of the intricate, weird, or unexpected twists and turns of the early Nodes material. But, with that said, I will always have a soft spot for the ones that named themselves after a gap in the myelin sheath and for my home in South Dakota thousands of miles away. ~~[VICTORY] JEFFREY ELLINGER~~

STILL REMAINS

THE SERPENT

Without re-inventing themselves, Still Remains found a way to bring the doom and the bombastic dynamics of metal and theatrical rock all back to major label release #2 in a way that both pulverizes and mesmorizes. Imagine the melodic inventiveness of Muse and the multiple layers of Scandinavian metal all crashing into your ears like waves. Maybe this is what Underoath would sound like if they were stuck at Ozzfest for two years. Similar in scope both musically and lyrically to 2005's *Of Love And Lunacy*, the song "Dancing With The Enemy" throws a curveball by revealing a pop vulnerability that surprisingly works well. While the music of "The River Song" could've been culled from any one of a dozen screamo bands in the scene, it still feels like a song I'd like to hit the "repeat" button for, as do the other 10. It's good to have these guys back. ~~[ROADRUNNER] DOUG VAN PELT~~

SILVER CITIES

POWER AND STRIFE

No one would believe me if I said that Lou Reed liked to unwind to The Rolling Stones on any given sunrise return to his apartment after a night of carousing. He'd dance around the kitchen and rooster walk backwards like James Brown as he obscenely crooned about nervous breakdowns and mother's little helpers. Or maybe that was me in my broken-down Brooklyn flat wishing I was Lou Reed. Either way, NYC and the UK barf up a pretty good combination in the bodies of these four energetic young musicians. While these musical babes from the Left Coast haven't crafted one for the ages, they sure scratch that incessant itch I've had for too many decades.
~~[VELVET BLUE MUSIC] KERN COUNTY KID, THE~~

BLINDSIDE

THE BLACK ROSE EP

Due do to an impending label change, this latest effort from Sweden's finest is only available online for now, but it is well worth searching out. It features three live performances of songs from *The Great Depression*, as well as five new tunes. The album kicks off with "The Way You Dance," which contains the kind of toe tapping riffs and start-stop rhythms the title would suggest. "Slow Motion" is full of cool experimentation in the verses, with Christian Lindskog's syncopated vocals overtop of a quirky, lopsided beat. "Pretty Nights" and "The Color of My Eyes" feature more great instrumentation behind Lindskog's always stellar vocals. The title track is a stripped down acoustic song built on a mournful, minor key melody. The slightly strained vocals on this song either make for a cool, honest feel or are just a distraction, depending on your taste. The live tracks are rough as can be expected, but chock full of emotion. This is a great step forward for Blindside, and yet one more line on this band's already impressive sonic resume. ~~[WASA] TIM HALLILA~~

SPOKEN

S/T

Spoken is kind of like screamo that walks the line for public consumption. They're highly technical, scream a lot through their breakdowns, and their melodies (about 50% of the record) are on point as well. That 50% singing prevents them from diving headfirst into some kind of "-core" genre, but don't be surprised if they still take you by surprise. This quintet from Arkansas puts a good foot forward with their sophomore self-titled release. The ending breakdown to "Long Live the Dream" kills; their transitions in "Close Your Eyes" set up a solid end result to the song. Produced by Travis Wyrick (of P.O.D. fame), the record pushes the limits with layering guitars over melodies and transitioning screams to melodies and breakdowns. For fans of The Used – but a little heavier. ~~[TOOTH & NAIL] DAVID STAGG~~

HIGH FLIGHT SOCIETY

S/T

The debut release from High Flight Society is going to be a hit with fans of commercial Christian rock. Like Anberlin or Kutless, these four very talented young guys from a small town in Georgia have the guitar hooks, melodies and production to make them a fan favorite. Songs like "Declaration" and "Sweet Redeemer" have lyrics that will energize youth and youth pastors alike. The best thing about HFS is the vocals. Jason Wilkes has an amazing voice and range and he's a lot of fun to listen to. The only problem is originality. The album lacks edge … it leaves me wanting. There are a number of bands out there with this sound and these lyrics. What we need is something that's real. Something fresh. High Flight Society has the talent and potential to really go places and rise above the pack, they just need to get some more life experience under their belts and use it to spark their creativity to be more artistically adventurous on their next record. ~~[RKT] DR. TONY SHORE~~

UNDEROATH

777 DVD

Underoath has a way of transfixing a crowd similar to the way a snake charmer mesmerizes a snake. Their spirited stage presence resonates through innocent bystanders and intentional fans alike, bringing even the darkest corners to light. Their infectious energy seems to be trapped in some oppressed vault within and the only release is raw, no-faking-this, unrestrained vitality. Underoath has taken the music scene by storm overnight and now they've even taken over the world. The band's hand-held home video camera documents live footage along with lots of "brodown" time where "The Milk Gallon Challenge" among other various forms of entertainment ensue. The journey covers Paris, New Zealand, London and Japan and all the traveling in between. It also covers U.S. tours and festivals, allowing fans to get to know the guys of Underoath that much more. All fans universally share the same unquenchable thirst for more of what only Underoath can supply. ~~[TOOTH & NAIL] AMANDA CURTIS~~

MICHELLE SHOCKED

TO HEAVEN U RIDE

Michelle Shocked's artistic curiosity has led her from folk to country, with many stylistic stops along the way, while her staunchly political stance has expanded to incorporate a strongly religious angle. With *ToHeavenURide*, Shocked expresses her faith via a distinctly black gospel context. She takes her political shots at George W. Bush when introducing "The Quality of Mercy," originally written for the *Dead Man Walking* soundtrack. She just can't understand why someone so supportive of the sanctity of life, allowed the state he once governed (Texas) to rack up so many capital punishment deaths. Shocked is loose and spontaneous-sounding throughout, and she's backed by a few homies, the singing Dancys from New Greater Circle Mission Church in South L.A. Captured at the 2003 Telluride Bluegrass Festival, Shocked comfortably inhabits these familiar songs, including Staple Singers' "Wade in the Water" and Sister Rosetta Tharp's "Strange Things Are Happening Every Day." But are we shocked? Nah! ~~[MIGHTY SOUND] DAN MACINTOSH~~

NEEDTOBREATHE

THE HEAT

If pop/rock radio represents the collective musical appetite for the population at-large, consider Needtobreathe as the main course that's been marinated in all the right seasonings: giant hooks, sweeping anthems, memorable choruses, catchy melodies and all. The quartet's debut, *Daylight*, showcased vocalist Bear Rinehart's signature soulful vocal and the band's incredible pop sensibilities that made it seem they'd been around for years. If anything, *The Heat*, Needtobreathe's follow-up on Atlantic Records, not only proves *Daylight* wasn't a flash in the pan; but that they are, in fact, just getting started. Rinehart's vocals are sharper, more defined while the music branches out just a bit into more soulful, creative territory. Perhaps touring with Train, Jars of Clay, Collective Soul and others paid some creative dividends. "Washed in the Water" features a clap-along, organic gospel feel and Rinehart's vocals are pitch-perfect here. The piano-driven "Nothing Left to Lose" breathes fresh air between guitar-laden anthems. "Restless" boasts the most inventive, infectious percussion the band has released yet and features a Keane-like sound built on driving piano rhythms. There exist few bands with the combination of musical poise, charisma, talent and charm of Needtobreathe and those bands tend to sell millions of albums. *The Heat* is exactly what you hoped a follow-up would sound like, only exhibiting the fact that Needtobreathe continue to know exactly what they are doing. ~~[SPARROW/ATLANTIC] MATT CONNER~~

LENGSEL

THE KISS ... THE HOPE

Despite the lackluster response from the metal community over the released single off this record, I found some *Solace* in it. The former extreme metal band continued their experimentation on *The Kiss…The Hope*. They blend European goth from the 80's with old school punk, with tinges of their black metal past. Added into the diversity of the album are hints of ambient and drone. Although this was not expected, fans of quirky music with extreme edges should give it a listen. I have to admit that they should have changed names of their band, yet some could see this album as a progression. It takes you through a wide musical journey, and leaves you wanting to listen again, just to see how much it could grow on you. ~~[OPEN GRAVE] DANIEL JESSE~~

AFTER EDMUND

HELLO

After Edmund is another successful addition into the bodily heated, tightly packed, fast-moving, pop rock bandwagon. "Pop rock" is used loosely, because their influences seem like they are from different types of pop rock. One song's style might sound similar to Jonezetta's sort of contagious synth-pop rock, yet the next song might sound similar to Coldplay; both bands sound significantly different, yet both can be deemed as pop rock. Cutting, melodic vocals, clever drums, and catchy riffs cohere the diverse momentums of each song together. This album oozes with musical experience, which makes perfect sense, considering three of the members have had formal music-related education. Sometimes Christian lyricist's messages are somewhat left open to listeners' interpretation, but this band clearly communicates messages of hope and grace that is found in Jesus – without sounding cheesy, which is impressive for their genre. ~~[SLANTED] JENN SMITH~~

KIDS IN THE WAY

A LOVE HATE MASQUERADE

Expect way more watered-down pop and way less screamo rock. In fact, there's no screaming at all. *A Love Hate Masquerade* is a more upbeat, radio-friendly, pop album in comparison to previous album, *Apparitions of Melody*. Kids in the Way have found the formula for a perfect pop song and use it for nearly every track. Catchy sing-along choruses will be stuck in your head for days as this album gives the listener something to tap their foot to, but lacks substance with repetitive cliché lyrics appealing to a younger crowd with songs such as, "We Kill at Midnight:" "Now she's hungry for the blood of any boy ... she's a devil in black stilettos ... everybody run, everybody run / the homecoming queen has got a gun." ~~[FLICKER] AMANDA CURTIS~~

ELEVENTYSEVEN

GALACTIC CONQUEST

It's round two for the rawkin', snot-nosed little brothers of the increasingly artsy Relient K, and the ES boys are having too much fun. This disc is chock-full of upbeat teen anthems with bigger production, monophonic synth runs, and even some pseudo-techno breakdowns. Only once does an acoustic guitar rear its head on "It's Beautiful." Throw in some strings, orchestral percussion, and a lyric about how God turns "mistakes into miracles," and you have a nice little ditty in the middle of the mayhem. You get a great sunny, 80's tinged tune that would make good teen movie soundtrack material ("How It Feels"). You get a breakneck speed jam with a bridge of "Hallelujah's" ("Fight To Save Your Life"). There's even a silly, fun ode to a certain late-night talk host ("Conan"). The CD ends with "Galaxies Collide," and it's time again for tongue-in-cheek techno ... wait ... wow! It's full-on disco! (complete with Locoer). Now's the time on sprockets when we dance! This veers dangerously close to boy band territory, but on every great album there is one song that makes the fans say, "What were they thinking?" This is that song. I would be remiss if I did not mention the truly bold lyrical statement on the tune, "12 Step Programs." ES tackles this controversial issue head-on with "Take back all your self-help programs / It was self that got me here in the first place." Definitely something to chew on. Maybe in the future these young men will wrestle with other heavyweight subjects, but for now they're having too much fun.
~~[FLICKER] PAUL Q-PEK~~

HORDE

ALIVE IN OSLO

Last year Jayson Sherlock (of Paramaecium, Mortification fame) assembled players to bring life to his mid-90s unblack metal one-man band, Horde, to play for their only gig ever ... so far. And like their/his lone studio predecessor, howlingly fierce and ferocious unblackness, with tints of undeathness (lifeness) a dash of doom takes back the satanic attack of so much musical darkness on *Alive In Oslo*. The live setting arguably brings more fuel to their sanctified musical conflagration, and a guest spot by Crimson Moonlight's vocalist definitely does. Sherlock (whoops, Anonymous) keeps his Hordean gutteral growl for what little between-tunes patter he dispenses. Without holding your breath for another such concert, this is anybody's best shot at hearing the powerfully unhinged sounds of these masters of their craft with most all the glory minus their sweat. ~~[VERIDON MUSIC] JAMIE LEE RAKE~~

Ratings

	DV	Writer
NeedToBreathe *The Heat*	03	04
Lengsel *The Kiss ... The Hope*	04	04
After Edmund *Hello*	03	03*
Kids In The Way *A Love Hate Masquerade*	03	02*
Eleventyseven *Galactic Conquest*	03	03
Horde *Alive In Oslo*	02*	04
I Sleepwalker *Snake River*	02*	
Klank *In Memory Of...*	02*	
Various Artists *Song Of America*	03	
Inhabited *Love*	03	
Oceans Above *S/T*	03	
Pilgrims *Remember The Poor*	02*	03
Remembrance *Beyond The Scope Of Reason*	02*	03*
Destroy Nate Allen *Take It Easy: On The Road With*	03*	
12 Stones *Anthems For The Underdog*	03	
The Devil Wears Prada *Plagues*	04	

I SLEEPWALKER
SNAKE RIVER
The dirty Southern metal party that Maylene seemingly spawned has been crashed by yet another band. This one starts with a flurry of classical and progressive keyboard fills that conjure ideas of gothic heaviness (an instrumental track called "Apocalypstick"), only to give way to string-bending good ole boy rock riffs that rise and fall like boat-sinking ocean waves of rhythm. Kenton's wreckless vocals come flying in with equal parts urgency and twang. It's heavy and charming, although Kenton's vocals wear thin after several listens. [HARVEST EARTH] DOUG VAN PELT

KLANK
IN MEMORY OF...
It's great to have this awesome industrial rock player back on CD. The marriage of high speed danceable riffs, crazy samples and tough guy vocals start off in fine form with the lead-off track, "2 Face," but (from a rock standpoint) things dip slightly downwards from there ... capturing some cool aggression here and there, like "See What You Got" and "Stole A Piece Of Me," but sounding more like a good starting point on a resumed career rather than a defining moment. Not an "immediate" album, it does get better with repeated listenings. The hip-hop flavor of "Can You Feel It," ironically, is probably the strongest tune. A couple fun bonus tracks are his theme song offerings for ESPN and the XFL. Here's hoping for more – lots more! [SMOKEDOGG] DOUG VAN PELT

VARIOUS ARTISTS
SONG OF AMERICA
Blind Boys Of Alabama, Take 6, Danielson, and an equally esoteric collection of artists (Marah, BR549, Andrew Bird, John Mellencamp) contribute tracks to this 3-disc boxset of truly Americana songs that span from the year 1492 to the present. Perfect coffee shop or conversation music (at least until Danielson breaks the relative quietness with his brash and energetic take on "Happy Days Are Here Again"), it's an indie rock set made in heaven.
[31 TIGERS/SPLIT ROCK] DOUG VAN PELT

INHABITED
LOVE
Sara Acker's strong, expressive and soulful vocals are buoyed by solid blues and rock tunes in stirring performance after stirring performance that would certainly land her and Inhabited in Hollywood if this were *American Idol*. RIYL: Kelly Clarkson's "rock side." [SLANTED] DOUG VAN PELT

OCEANS ABOVE
S/T
While not as left-of-center as the *E-Praise* project of several years ago, this collection of some of today's most popular worship tunes does have a slightly over-saturated, too-sweet kitschy pop flavor that's not too far removed from, say, Joy Electric's analog pop. Maybe comparisons to the stripped-down bells, strings and horns of Anathallo would be more accurate. Anyways, it serves as a refreshing spiritual and musical drink for the burned-out-on-soccermom-worship-music heard everywhere. [SPARROW] DOUG VAN PELT

PILGRIMS
REMEMBER THE POOR
Pilgrim is defined as a traveler or wanderer in a foreign place. That's exactly how the listener feels when embarking on the adventure known as *Remember the Poor*. Or perhaps, this is how minimalist Brian Flechtner felt when creating this post-classical, pre-rock experiment. Unidentifiable sounds jump out from every direction – guitars, chimes, banjos, bongo drums, flutes, background noise, clapping, dissonant noise and possibly rain are some of the sounds collected and dispersed throughout the album. Organic sound in its purest state is found here, no perfected, polished studio sound. This allows for the listener to decipher the clamor for themselves and get from it what they choose. Some songs offer lingering questions, such as "In a Mountain," while others are raw and honest worship ballads, like "John the Revelator" matched with songs strictly about the experience rather than the words – making them barely audible. This album is for those who dare to travel the musical path less traveled – the abstract, eccentric path. [QUIVER SOCIETY] AMANDA CURTIS

REMEMBRANCE
BEYOND THE SCOPE OF REASON
It's here, it's metal, it's brutal – it's Remembrance. The *Beyond The Scope of Reason* package includes: heart attack-inducing drums and bass pulses, guitar hammering and harmonizing, and Adam Klein's monstrous vocals. Adam has found what seems like the exact midpoint between growling and shrieking, not to be confused with mere screaming – his voice somehow found its way around that, too. Some of the songs have also been punctuated with melodic choruses. Package also includes: innovative transitions into breakdowns, progressively heavier breakdowns as the album plays, complete with chugs and stings (you know, the high-pitched noises guitars make), and a southern metal twist in "Distance" (don't forget your cowbell!). This album will make you want to dance in a pit regardless of your pit move capabilities (or lack there of). The beginning of "Truth Beyond Reality" sounds like it would be ideal for a circle pit.
[RAGING STORM] JENN SMITH

DESTROY NATE ALLEN
TAKE IT EASY: ON THE ROAD WITH...
This is one of those "miracle" albums of sorts, that genuinely caught the artist with his guard down, hitting the record button in someone's basement studio in the vampire hours of the morning. Without the aid (or hindrance) of energy to carefully micro-manage the recording process, out comes raw nerves, passion, grit and slightly urgent strumming on the guitar. In other words, he was too tired to hold back or be self-conscious. It's easy to imagine Nate trying to play faster in an effort to finish the song and get to sleep quicker. "Stand By Me" calls out with cracked voice, while "Ambulance" patiently expresses emotions of being "tired of being this wired," and "Take It Easy" almost serves as both a toast and life-sermon – all seeming more believable in the end. Check out either one of these tunes out and you'll have a perfect representation of Nate's musical identity. The 4 bonus live tracks are an accurate testament to his infectious songs, too, as they capture an audience joyfully singing or clapping along – especially during his great and unforgettable older tune, "Don't Walk Away." [QUIVER SOCIETY] DOUG VAN PELT

12 STONES
ANTHEM FOR THE UNDERDOG
Imagine if you were Paul McCoy. You made a cameo appearance in the song and video for Evanescence's breakout hit ("Bring Me To Life"), but get seemingly forgotten in the rush to crown Amy Lee & Co. the next great attraction. Your band, 12 Stones, is a solid but forgettable raprock band at the time. Now, some five or six years later his band has evolved – but into a rock band ... of the Nickelback variety. (uh-oh) The problem with trendy musical styles is you will absolutely not get any favors from rock critics. Enter a quote from the wise writer, Chris Estey, who once shared this advice with HM's staff: "Judge each artist according to its genre." Now meet the fair album review: "Copy of a copy" allegations aside, *Anthem for the Underdog* is a memorable, hook-filled collection of rock anthems. Like last year's sophomore surprise, Day of Fire, McCoy and company deliver a no-frills hard rock set here with nary a tired note. The speedy rocker "Adrenaline" is aptly named, as it moves along with energy and verve. For the audience that matters more (rock consumers), this album fits like a glove.
[WIND-UP] DOUG VAN PELT

THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA
PLAGUES
This brand of "horror-core" is absolutely amazing. One of the bands with the biggest buzzes at Cornerstone Fest this year returns with their sophomore effort on Rise Records, which seems quicker than the usual wait between debut and album #2. The haunting keys and shrill black metallic shrieks and screams are all put to bed with incredibly tight drumming and aggressive riffage that's as tall and ferocious as anything else out there, but melodic and beautifully sing-able at other times. [RISE] DOUG VAN PELT

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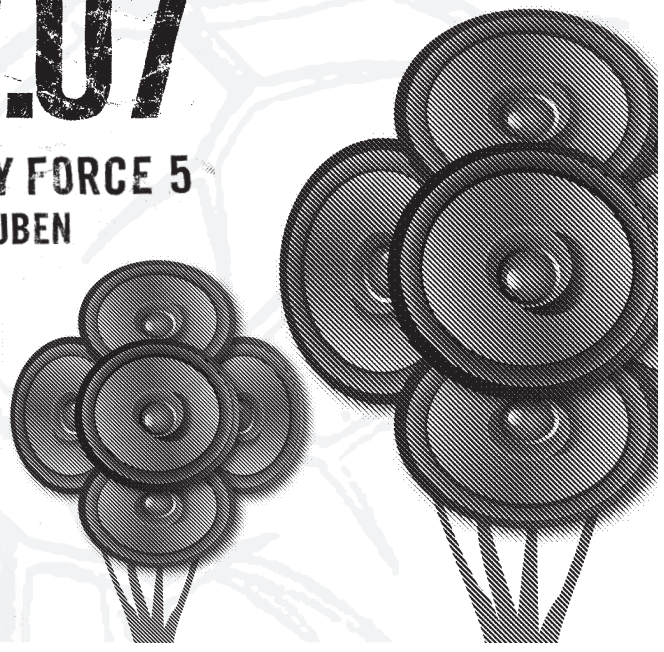

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As I Lay Dying

DREAMS ON A COLLISION COURSE

BY DOUG VAN PELT

Tim Lambesis and his band, As I Lay Dying, are so metal that they seem to fearlessly tread into lyrical concepts with no regards to the fallout. 2005's *Shadows Are Security* expounded on love – which can be somewhat of a taboo subject for tough metal guys. The band's new album, *An Ocean Between Us*, expresses the sometimes awkward but real differences between a Christian and a non-believer.

In today's world, many Christians in the Western hemisphere are finding themselves increasingly mingled with those of differing or even opposing worldviews or faiths. Like it or not, our once independent and isolated culture is now becoming more cosmopolitan. In a religious and cultural sense, the USA is becoming similar to Europe. Many a Christian in the West has found him or herself with greater quantities of non-Christian friends as they venture outside of the perceived (or deceived) "safety" of their four church walls. As enthusiasts of hard music with a faith perspective, this very magazine has openly rejoiced over the fact that there's a lot more "Christian bands" or "artists of faith" wearing their colors in the mainstream music world. As I Lay Dying is just one of many of those bands.

In order to co-exist in a mixing bowl of cultural differences, sometimes it's best to just focus on the similarities we share. Bringing up the differences can be an instigator of conflict – especially in a heavy metal culture dominated by Cradles, Slayers, Cannibals and Deicides. Ignoring the differences between a Christian metal band and a band like Dimmu Borgir, however, is like trying to pretend the proverbial mastodon in the room isn't there. Granted, there are differences – some of which can be easily spotted (or perceived) in the merch artwork, between-song banter, and sometimes even on the band's performance riders (the contractual "wish lists" or demands bands make of their promoters concerning the backstage accoutrements). Bringing up these differences when the subject comes up is one thing; but basing the central theme and title of an album on it is quite another.

"The album title is *An Ocean Between Us*," explains Lambesis. "That's actually one of the song titles as well. I would say that this album is more scattered topically. I just wrote about what was heavy on my heart when we were writing that particular song. I chose the title 'An Ocean Between Us' as a song, because it feels like that was probably one of the most important songs, lyrically, to me. Because it was dealing with us (and) our place in this world; and how the whole world kind of has one line of thinking... Ever since we're born, we're sort of taught to live one way, but then it's like 'An Ocean Between Us' represents the gap that there should be between my dreams and the dreams that have been handed down to me. I really wanted to emphasize that – that sort of separation. Obviously, I'm not saying that I'm totally different than everybody else in this world, but I think that ultimately should be our goal.

"One thing that I really wanted to go for with this album," underlines Lambesis, "is a strong sense of really making the most of our opportunities being in a band. I don't know how to gauge success. I don't think success necessarily has to do with album sales, but at least the band is successful in the eyes of the world, where we've sold enough records that I know that there's people out there listening to what we have to say and I sort of take that responsibility seriously. Some of our albums, the lyrics have been very personal and I think that that's always important, because it's something to be passionate about, because you're singing those lyrics every night on stage – they have to be very personal. But with this album I wanted people to be able to read the lyrics and know what I'm getting at. Know what I'm talking about, and not just go, 'Oh, that must be something really personal to him,' but actually they're challenged or even if they're not challenged, it's maybe a topic they totally relate to or (may not) totally agree with, but at least they would know exactly what I'm saying. To me, that kind of coincides with the album title – *An Ocean Between Us*. Even in a poetic sense, that song particularly has poetic lyrics to it. At the end of the song, it's really talking about how part of the dreams that the world has – are those dreams really ever gonna come true? Are they really worth following? It's about that sort of separation and are you willing to fight for something more important – something real? Obviously, being a Christian band, we have (been) very obvious to what is really worth fighting for.

"Living in Southern California and driving by the ocean every day and seeing absolutely how massive it is, the metaphor is even that much stronger for me, thinking that, as Christians, we really need to make sure that we are different, that we are set apart. And that whole idea becomes pretty clouded in day to day life – in going to work; we're definitely in the world, but not being a part of the world."

The thought that this could be somewhat oft-putting to an unbeliever is not lost on the man. "I think that title and that concept can come across very pompous to somebody who's not a Christian, thinking, 'Oh, this person wants to be totally different from me or they think they're better than me,' or something like that. I don't necessarily even mean it in that sense of, like, being different. Obviously, we have a lot of things in common with a lot of bands we tour with. We've established amazing friendships with those guys. I just mean in the sense of what's important to us and what our hopes are and what our dreams are. The whole idea of a success in the world I think comes down to how much money you've made and how popular you are or how many people like your band, from people who are touring and stuff. That's one side of it. I want there to be an ocean between me and that, as far as in my hopes and dreams. What's important to me needs to be what's eternal, not necessarily the material things of this world."

The day I interviewed Lambesis for this story, he was in the studio with Sworn Enemy. The morning interview was pushed back a few hours, because apparently a hard drive was "lost" in the mixing process. A backup file accidentally had over-written the wrong file and vocal tracks for an entire song had to be re-tracked. This computer/tech hassle didn't seem to phase the frontman one bit. "I actually think it came out a little better anyway," he explained, letting the frustration roll of his back as if it was no big deal.

Photos: Stephanie Cabral

SMOKE MASTER
CUSTOM SHOP

I wondered out loud if this successful (and growing) metal band had any mentors from which they took pointers from in navigating the sometimes riptide-like waters of talking to the press and having to deal with the label of "Christian rock band." Did they regularly chat with some elder musician, like fellow San Diegans P.O.D., N.I.V., or even members of Stryper for tips and whatnot. What I found was a band that's been doing their thing (quite well, I might add) without the aid or advice of any other band. Not bad for a regular guest on *Headbanger's Ball* and a headliner from *Ozzfest 2006* and *Warped Tour '07*.

wizard and much sought-after producer Adam Dutkiewicz to oversee *An Ocean Between Us*. "He's usually pretty goofy, but he knows when it's time to really get down to business. He's got a great set of ears – particularly when tracking guitars and everything. He hears stuff that I definitely wouldn't be able to hear. It works out really well that he's a drummer and a guitar player, so both Jordan and Phil and Nick can play their instruments and feel like, not only was Adam producing it, but he was also a musician that they respected. It's funny, because we always joked around that if it took them too many takes, that Adam's threat was that he was going to take it over and play it himself. Even if he actually never did that, knowing that he actually understands what's involved in playing each instrument really helped."

"I want there to be an ocean between me and that, as far as in my hopes and dreams. What's important to me needs to be what's eternal, not necessarily the material things of this world."

Instead of being some sort of calculated and strategic Christian rocker out to change the world with a master plan, these guys are humbly and quite nonchalantly just going about their business as musicians and living their lives as followers of Christ without wrestling over any supposed contradictions that the two identities might find themselves in some folks' minds. Trying to find any sort of secret ambitions or formulated plans from their teenage past, dreaming about playing arenas is an effort in journalistic futility.

"We definitely went out of our way to avoid being pigeonholed in that category, musically. But, of course, we've always wanted to stand up for what we believed in. We decided that the best way to do that was by writing music that was perfect for other people and then … I really don't think it helps to share the Christian side of the band unless they're already interested in the band, ya know?"

When it comes to influences, lyrically it seems to be mostly from the heart; while musically it mostly comes screaming out of speakers. "I'm very involved – as musically involved as well as writing the lyrics, so I would say I have separate influences for each – musically I'm influenced by a lot of bands I don't necessarily agree with their lyrical content; and then lyrically I'm probably just influenced by life. In the sense that … of (a) faith that teaches forgiveness and struggles you go through. Actually, being a Christian and trying to be set apart and separate from the typical actions of the world around us. Lyrically, that's what influenced me.

"Musically, I'd say I guess the first metal band that I heard was actually Metallica. 'Battery' was on the radio. I'm not sure… It was a song on the *Master of Puppets*… I can't remember, because I was so young. I couldn't just drive to a record store and buy albums in those days, because we were kids. That song was the first that made me realize how metal was the kind of music I wanted to listen to. There was just heavier music in general. Then, in high school, I got more into punk and hardcore. I was definitely influenced by some of the late 90s hardcore, like Earth Crisis and even bands that we've taken on tour, like, Madball. Being in San Diego, one of our biggest influences was No Innocent Victim. Being such a heavy band … but they really fought and stood up for what they believed in."

The love Lambesis has for both metal and punk is definitely apparent in the band's music, which borrows the howling, angry vocals from hardcore as much as the guitar riffs pay homage to the classic metal of yester-decade. It's also evident in the admiration and respect he has for both Iron Maiden and Madball – two bands he mentions in the same breath when asked about great moments and accomplishments in the band's career thus far. "I was just as honored to be taking Madball out on tour, even though they were opening for us … as playing with Iron Maiden (on *Ozzfest* last year)."

While the band tracked all the guitars, bass and vocals at Lambesis' own home studio – a feat he was quite proud of, they brought in Killswitch Engage guitar

Producing is something that's not a foreign or distant concept to Lambesis, either. He's had his hand on every recording project AILD has ever done; but lately he's been producing other bands as well. His resume includes A Love Ends Suicide and Sworn Enemy. His initial foray into the production side of things, however, was pretty much born out of necessity – going back to the days when the band had an extremely limited to no budget to work with. Eventually, his determination was fed when he saw the need to have someone producing the band in the studio. "As we had more studio experience under our belts and we went in and did our Metal Blade stuff, I started having more and more ideas and getting into the technical side of things and trying to learn as much as I can. And even now I'm much more capable of producing records now than I was on our Metal Blade debut, but I'm still learning all the time. With every record I've learned a few more tricks."

Before they went into the studio, and even before they began writing songs for *An Ocean…*, the band had to deal with that mammoth challenge that befalls the majority of musical groups – the personnel change. Clint Norris was AILD's bassist for a good three years, which is about half the total lifespan of the group; so it wasn't a minor change, by any means. (Because of his tenure) "It was a little different then than losing another member, but at the same time we all just kind of knew it was the right thing and the best thing, because he was getting married. His passion was in finding a job that he was going to work and be in town. He really wanted to pursue a career that would be his life-long career and he couldn't really picture himself doing this forever." Lambesis paused to state the obvious: "Whereas maybe some of us can."

It turns out that the change came at a good time, as they were all home writing for their new album. "Clint was always a great live presence, but he was never one of the songwriters in the band, so it was a period of time where he actually didn't impact (that aspect)… It didn't really stop us from moving forward. It kinda seemed like the best thing for everyone involved. We want somebody in the band who is absolutely passionate. In the future – somebody that's going to help out with songwriting as well. At least for this record, we were able to keep things going exactly how we would have wanted them whether Clint was in the band or not. It's been great. We were all there at his wedding a couple months ago. When we're at home, we all kind of hang out at local spots (and) we definitely run into Clint at those places."

Lambesis describes himself and his other bandmates with the familiarity of a close-knit family: "For starters, with Nick, he has the biggest extremes. Like, when he's in person in real life in everyday scenarios, he's … I wouldn't say happy-go-lucky, he just has a passion for life. He's excited all the time. He wants to tell you

about all the new things he's experienced. He's extremely friendly and as soon as he gets on stage he kind of switches to a different person – a very serious face. He kind of headbangs away … it almost seems like he's a different person. Me knowing Nick, I know that it's his time to kind of unleash the other side of himself. That's a quick snapshot.

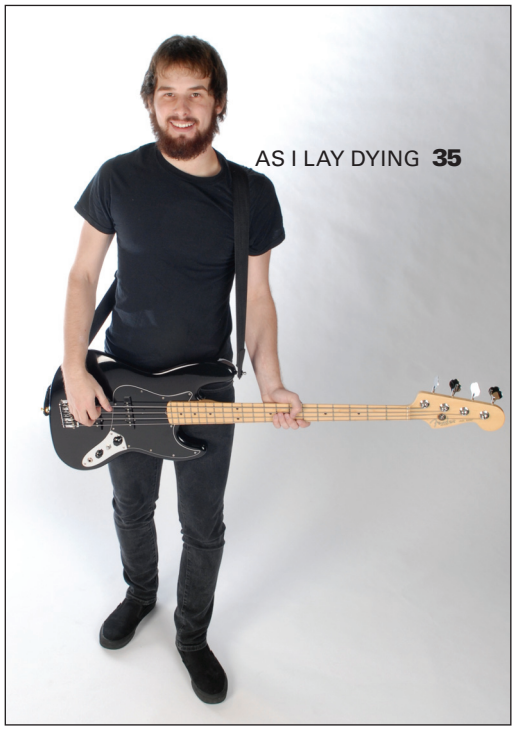
"Phil is kind of the opposite of Nick, in the social setting he's maybe a little quieter. I think he really thinks about everything that he has to say … and that really translates into how he is as a musician. He doesn't pick up a guitar and just start playing all around the neck. He really thinks about what he wants to write – and that really makes him a great songwriter; because he really focuses in and kind of speaks where it makes sense; on the guitar. He really thinks about each note that he's playing.

"Jordan is also pretty similar in real life as he is to his instrument. He's very organized and at the same time very passionate about what he does. If you ever go into Jordan's house, it would be absolutely clean. If you walked into a room and the carpet didn't look right, he would instantly get out the carpet cleaner and fix it up. And that's the way he is behind the drumkit – everything's gotta be perfect. That's definitely the way it is. He's an organized guy. He keeps his car clean. I can't really say that about myself. If you take a ride in my car, there's trash all over the floor. I'm trying to do too many things at the same time, so sometimes … I'm trying to drive and talk on the cell phone and eat my lunch and organizing the mail I just picked up from the mailbox, you know what I mean?"

After *An Ocean Between Us* drops on August, 21, this collection of enthusiastic, thoughtful, precise and multi-tasking guys finish up the *Warped Tour* and head over to Europe for a headlining tour, followed by the same in the US (probably stretching from late October to early December). "We'll hopefully get to spend some time with our families before we figure out what our next tour is."

If the general public reacts to this new album as zealously as HM's reviewer this issue did, 2007/2008 is geared up to certainly be the year of As I Lay Dying.

✖



AILD Sidebar

MEMORIES FROM THE PLUTO RECORDS DAYS ::: BY ERIC SHIREY

I first met Tim when he was playing guitar for Society's Finest. I just figured he was another kid dazzled by the ideas and dreams of "making" it in the music scene. Society's had a revolving door of players and never really kept members longer than a few months. He left Society's and moved back to California and I figured I'd never hear from him again. At the time, I was booking a club in Fort Worth called 412 and doing Pluto Records. Basically, I had three jobs – my day job, booking the club, and co-running Pluto with Brian. For some odd reason, Tim had come back to Texas to pick up some more of his belongings and decided to stop by the club to hang out. He began to tell me about his new band he started in California. They were called Life Once Lost. About a week later, we get a package in the mail with a CD and a letter from Tim in it. The letter states that the band is going to change their name to As I Lay Dying. We pop it in and I remember thinking, 'These guys are really tight and have a clean sound. They're nothing new, but they are good at what they do.' We could see the potential in the band and the fact that they were going to tour on their own showed us that they were serious about making the band work – a band that would work as hard as we did to push themselves. That early demo with "Life Once Lost" written on it had 5 of the songs that are now on *Beneath The Encasing Of Ashes* and the re-release on Metal Blade. They were ridiculously tight even on that old CD demo, though. So we signed them. The rest is history, I guess you would say.

Over the years, I have kept in touch with Tim and Jordan. Both are great guys and really good people. I go to their shows every time they come through town, and I see how they conduct themselves "behind the scenes" and with other bands. These guys are the same guys they've always been. Celebrity and success has done nothing to them. They do not have big egos or act like rock stars. They always go out of their way to talk to the fans and be approachable. I'm extremely proud to have been a part of their journey in the music business. Jordan is such a great, down-to-earth humble guy – one of the nicest guys you'll ever meet. Tim is one of the smartest businessmen I've ever met. I remember sitting with him at Furnace Fest, talking music business and watching him soak it all in like a sponge. He just always wanted to learn more about how everything works.

I'll tell you, we got a lot of crap for working with that band. People called them "Zao rip-offs" and said they sucked, were unoriginal or whatever. We just stuck to our guns and supported them. We knew they had the drive to make it happen and keep going. There was just something about them. What I think is funny, is that they're more successful now than their influences ever were or could dream to be. The same kids that called them crap and rip-offs are now their biggest fans and buying all their records up. My, how everything comes around full-circle.

FAITHFUL
TO THE
UNFAITHFUL

EPHRAIM

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EPHRAIM
EST: 2001

Ephraim is not your typical clothing brand especially your typical "Christian" brand explain creative directors Cameron and Alana Little. Cameron says, "It's normal for someone to look at an ephraim design and not get it at first. We really want to appeal aesthetically to a person and then explain to them the meaning."

What makes them unique is the way each one of their pieces has a meaning woven in to it. The concepts for the designs come from Scripture but are nowhere typical when you think "Christian" clothing. To put it plainly Alana says, "We want to be able to speak to people before they start labeling us. Many non-Christians have this idea in their head of what a Christian looks like, talks like, believes, etc. We know that they don't know who our Christ really is."

When it comes to the colors and images they use for some of their tees (sunshine, dirty teal, and seafoam green, to name a few), it is pretty obvious that ephraim is not a brand you can categorize easily. Alana said, "We are 'too Christian' for the secular market and 'not Christian enough' for the Christian market. A few years back, we decided that we were going to design the way we wanted, not the way people think we should."

"With that said, our style has evolved over time to attempt to be ahead of trends but have our own look as well." Like most companies change is natural but Cameron adamantly points out that the essence of ephraim to share absolute Truth creatively has never changed.

Evidence of this approach can be seen in themes for their upcoming fall and spring lines which will focus on the Sermon on the Mount highlighting the Beatitudes and something they call the Pauline letters (designs dedicated to the epistles of Paul). With these themes they will continue to share Christ in a creative way without sacrificing creativity.

As we concluded Cameron and Alana talked about God being the Creator of the world and how He has given each one of us gifts we can use to glorify Him. Cameron said, "God is a creative God. He gave each of us the capacity to create something unique. We want to contribute to the world and not replicate things already made."

words by: Braxton Winters

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WHO? WHAT? WHERE? WHEN? ...WHY?

How and when did Wise Men Promotions start?

"I was raised in a wonderful Christian home, but I never felt a real connection with Jesus. I chose to run the opposite direction for the first 24 years of my life – a life spent indulging in sex, alcohol and drugs. After getting a Christian roommate, I saw that real Christianity was more about inspiration and not pressure. I started to see the lives of people only following religion were having their lives destroyed, but those turning to a relationship with Jesus were given hope and grace. In 1998, I accepted Jesus into my life. At that moment I accepted the call into ministering for Him, no matter where that took me. That was the drive that started WMP in 2000. (Dennis' story can be found at *wisemenpromotions.com*)

Why did you start Sian Clothing?

After I got saved I wanted some shirts that were edgy and that could help me show my friends that something had changed in my life. It seemed the only shirts I found were not relevant at all and often were just copied from other designs. I wanted something original with an edge to it. I wanted something that would be relevant to a world seeking spirituality. Sian is a Welsh word meaning 'God's gracious gift.' We have one purpose: To spread the love of Christ through relevant clothing and apparel.

Tell us about your involvement with the "Free The West Memphis 3" Campaign.

I was born and raised less than 100 miles from where the tragic murders occurred of three young boys in West Memphis, Arkansas. In college I remember watching the news from the case that was going on just 30 miles away. It seemed the only reason these three teens were being charged was because they were into hard music and wore black shirts. In 2006 I was contacted by the organizer of the West Memphis Three World Awareness Day. We did the official logo for the event and have continued to sell thousands of the shirts while giving $5 from each shirt to their defense fund. It has also been very exciting to see that in the last couple weeks the case is being reopened.

What's been one of your most talked-about shirt designs?

We have a shirt that says, "Choose Life." We give $5 from each of those shirts to One Life Revolution, which helps support kids in Africa that have been orphaned by aids. What makes it such a memorable shirt is the reason behind the design. My son passed away in February 2006 – 38 weeks into the pregnancy. The shirt features his hands with angel wings with his initial and the date of when he went to heaven. It is incredible to know that my son, Hunter David Minner, is a minister to so many people and his life was so short.

I hear you're starting a church in NYC...

My goal in everything I have done is to be relevant to those that have been pushed away by the religious in the Church. We are moving to New York City in November and starting a church to show everyone that Jesus loves them no matter what is going on in their lives. It will be a challenging move for my family, but we know that is where God wants us. The Awakening will be a church for those tired of playing church. It will be a church for those that want to be the church. It will be a place where people can come as they are and also be who they are. We feel this is important, because so many think they need to act or be a certain way before attending many churches. The shirts we sell through Sian Clothing are going to help fund this ministry. (*theawakeningnyc.com*)

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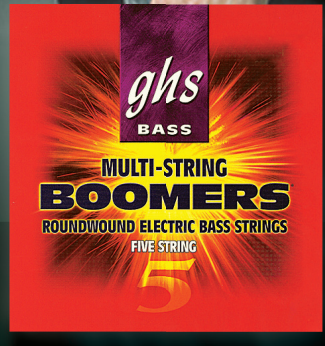
Ben Kasica



design by bobgraves@lartmagazin.com

Abortion kills, not with guns, but with medical instrumentation. If that doesn't bother you, you probably have no idea how barbaric a practice abortion actually is. Thankfully, Abort73 offers you both a thorough education, and a simple way to extend that education to those around you. Not knowing is ignorance. Knowing, and doing nothing, is even worse. Educate yourself. Educate your world!

ATTENTION HM READERS, DON'T MISS THIS EXCLUSIVE OFFER: Visit **Abort73.com/HM** during the month of September to get a "Guns" shirt of your own for only $8 (also available in black, white, or pink). **Bands & Musicians:** Send us a picture of you wearing an Abort73 shirt in concert, for a chance to be featured in the Music section of our MySpace page: **MySpace.com/Abort73**

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LOVE, GUNS & T-SHIRTS

CHANGING THE WAY A NATION THINKS ABOUT ABORTION

BY MIKE SPIELMAN
FOUNDER & DIRECTOR OF ABORT73.COM
AUTHOR OF *A BIBLICAL MANDATE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT ABORTION*

There's something ironic in the fact that Abort73's two most popular T-shirts feature "love" and "guns", respectively. They outsell all the others by 2 or 3 to 1, and while the terms may seem at odds with each, the T-shirts certainly aren't. Every Abort73 shirt works together for the exact same purpose... to bring as many people as possible to Abort73.com. Why? Because abortion continues to strike down nearly 4,000 innocent human beings *every single day* in this country. It's time we got a better sense of what abortion actually is and does! To that end, Abort73.com provides the most thorough, engaging, and accessible abortion education in the world. Visiting the website makes it almost impossible to ever trivialize abortion again. Though Abort73 doesn't have the market cornered on "pro-life" T-shirts, you'll be hard-pressed to find any other shirts with a more strategic approach. T-shirts, left to themselves, are a very poor educational tool. They can deliver a slogan, but little else (and slogans don't prove anything). That's why Abort73 gave up on the notion that you can sufficiently educate someone about abortion with a few inches of passing fabric. What makes more sense is to employ those same inches of fabric to direct people to the one place where they *can* be educated, Abort73.com. It's unlikely that a T-shirt will be able to change the way someone thinks about abortion, but the right website can do just that (and T-shirts are a great way to get people there!).

READY FOR A SHIRT OF YOUR OWN? Visit Abort73.com/shirts
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JŌB APPAREL COLLECTIVE

Everyone's life tells a story. Life is a story about pain, suffering, perseverance and hope. *Jōb Apparel Collective*™ was born out of this reality and a firm belief that life has purpose... even in our hardest times.

Just like life, our apparel tells a story. We use bright saturated accent colors with darker fabrics and colors in each article to represent the important themes in the stories of our products:

- Crimson Mercy
- Redemption Green
- Refuge Blue
- Hope Gold

Jōb Apparel Collective™ exists to be a voice of truth and hope to all people in both their joy and pain. This brand is a reflection of our faith in a sovereign God who gives us strength to heroically endure all things and transform hardship into something far greater than mere pain. Our *truth tag* uniquely printed on the underside waist cuff of every tee points out the shirt's meaning. The *truth tag* on our blown flower tee for both men and women reads "You must first lose your life to find it," while the truth tag on our number heads tee reads "What if everything does happen for a reason?"

My ears had heard of you, but now my eyes have seen you. Job 42.5

The story of Job reveals a man of historic proportions and heroic endurance. Although he is not our contemporary, the events Job encountered would be familiar headline news... a man with everything relegated to nothing. His life journey was a life in the watchful eye of God, to whom he had committed his devotion and obedience.

Believe with us and be transformed. ō

Visit us on the web at: www.job425.com

HM THE HARD MUSIC MAGAZINE

FLEETHE SEEN

Photo: Caleb Kuhl

www.believeusa.com

an
independent
art collective

Q: How did Believe Clothing begin?
A: I have been drawing ever since I could hold a pencil. Though I never "studied" art in a formal manner, it has always been a means of release and communication for me. In 2005 while I was going to business school, I began making a few t-shirts for fun. It became addicting, and has now grown into Believe Clothing.

Q: What about the Frumious Bandersnatch?
A: I've met him... not really a pleasant fellow.

Q: Where can Believe Clothing be found?
A: Our stuff will be available at our site, www.believeusa.com, at The Anti Shop.com, Smartpunk.com and other online stores. We are also in the process of getting into independent retailers across the nation.

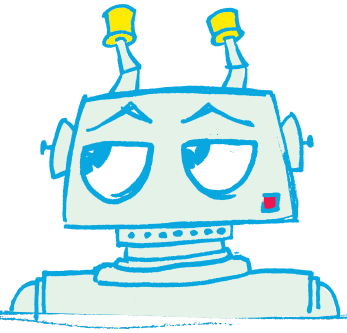
Q: Why?
A. Because

Q: What about the recent decision to go primarily non-branded?
A: We recently decided to make most of our new designs non-branded. That is, the clothing will feature artwork, but will not have the Believe name prominently displayed on the garment. We want to convey a humble, conscious attitude, and the promotion offered by branded products wasn't worth the aesthetic cost. People want to be visually greeted by art, not by another company.

Q: What are the parapets?
A: I was just trying to figure that out myself.

Q: Do you support any cause or social action?
A: One of our main aims has always been to use any clothing sales we make to help those in need. We are currently talking with some social action organizations about providing official support.

We're friendly to a fault, so look us up and talk to us about whatever you like!



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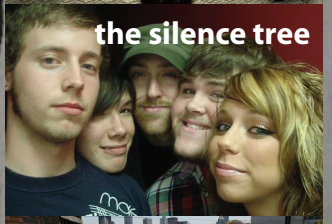
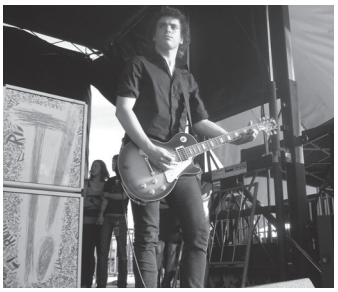
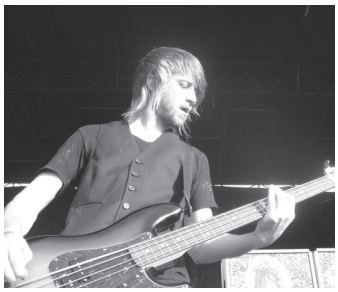






YOU CAN SAY WHAT YOU WANT ABOUT PARAMORE, BUT WE'VE GOT REASON TO BELIEVE THIS BAND HAS WHAT IT TAKES TO STAND LEAGUES ABOVE THE REST OF THE INDIE POP SCENE. GOOD LOOKS ALONE DIDN'T GET THE MEMBERS OF PARAMORE NOTICED, THEIR CLASSIC TALENT AND KILLER STAGE APPEARANCE, AND SHEER YOUTHFUL HONESTY HAS PLAYED A PART AS WELL. WITH TWO YEARS OF SOLID TOURING AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM THEIR PREVIOUS RELEASE, *ALL WE KNOW IS FALLING*, THEIR POLISHED SOPHOMORE RELEASE, *RIOT!* WILL BE BIG.

Paramore's talent and tireless hard work often get lost at sea by the obvious facts, which we all know by now. Number one being, the 'frontman' is cute, redheaded 18-year old Hayley Williams. Number two; they are young. Tell us something we don't know. Rather than focusing on the music, any press about Paramore seems to either depict Paramore as the ideal kids next door or portrays Hayley as a bossy powerhouse.

"People talk about how I sort of run this band and how I'm (laughs) large and in charge. And I don't think ... I hope I'm not like that. I think a lot of people just focus way too much on the fact that I'm a girl and they read way too much into it." States Hayley with a hint of annoyance in her voice, "Being a band, we don't look at it as a girl-fronted, 'Hayley runs the show' kinda thing, it's just the four of us making music that we love."

Above all, Paramore hopes their passion for music to surge out on top of the hum-along guitar riffs and even catchier lyrics and go beyond shallow stereotypes. Like all great artists, they create for the love of the art, not for status.

"Hopefully, people will start to get and understand that." Hayley goes on to cautiously add, "If the press never grasps that, then I doubt people will understand it, because so many people listen to what's being printed these days."

Besides, they must be doing something right, Paramore is touring internationally, co-headlining *Warped Tour 2007*, touring with names such as My Chemical Romance, Hellogoodbye and The Almost, and has even gained enough momentum to stand on their own two feet fronting their own headlining tours. Not bad for only being an official band since 2005.

After two years of solid touring, the band has grown together and individually and are ready to release a second album. Introducing, *Riot!*, an upbeat, raw and unyielding pop album, resembling a more polished product of their debut, *With All We Know is Falling*. This album proves to be a more accurate representation of the band's capacity. Naturally, new life lessons are being learned everyday and life on the road becomes inspiration and influence. Hayley spoke on behalf of the entire band in saying they are exceptionally proud of this record. "It's definitely different and I hope kids can adjust to it." Hayley said, expressing her enthusiasm for the album. "We're definitely excited and feel really good about the record, people will learn a lot about us through it."

The second time around, Paramore was able to dedicate additional quality time writing and recording *Riot!*, produced by Davis Bendeth (Hawthorne Heights, Killswitch Engage, Red Jumpsuit Apparatus). This time, the band brought experience of the road and a game plan. The group was able to utilize the past and prepare for the future direction of their music. Allowing Paramore a steady pathway to follow rather than blazing their own for the first time.

"With *All We Know is Falling*, I don't think we really knew what we were going for at all. I think we were just so excited to be recording a record for a label like Fueled by Ramen, and we had about a month, really, to do it. We went in, recorded what we could and went straight back on the road. This time around we set aside a good three or four months to write and record this one. I feel like it definitely paid off. It's just we have so much more confidence having toured for two years. Having learned each other better both personally and musically, I think we finally have something to show with *Riot!* for all that work we did on the road."

As we've all figured out by now, life is not always good times and blue skies; you get the bad with the good and visa versa. Hayley writes about what she knows and understands, and she's in this life with the rest of us. *Riot!* covers and contrasts the highs, the lows, and the gray areas in between. "I feel like that's very much how life is. You have really victorious, proud moments and then you also have times where you feel like you can't really go on anymore and it's all kind of pointless if you think about it." Hayley explains humbly, "That's all on the record and everything in between those two extremes."

Paramore has proved to the world they can pull off sunny day sing-along anthems right next to dark but hopeful epilogues. *Roit!* brilliantly mixes the two without losing the vivacious energy the album is propelled on.

"A song like 'Halleluiah' where someone might feel like, 'sure there's a lot of crap going on in my life, but I'm going to go head-first through it and come out a better and stronger person.'" Hayley said as she sheds light on the meaning behind the songs. "And there's also songs like 'We Are Broken,' where the person might feel like everything in the world is just screwed up and ask, 'Why does it have to be this way?' There's like a veil of hope in the song; but if you listen to it, it sounds pretty negative."

Paramore's music reflect influences ranging from life experience, to time on the road, to Jesus Christ. Hayley said each member of the band, as well as all the crew claims Christ in their everyday lives openly.

"As far as our music goes, if we didn't believe in God our music probably wouldn't be what it is, just because we'd be completely different people." Hayley said as she spoke openly about her beliefs. "There's no obvious lyrics in our music that have to do with our faith. I feel like if I didn't believe in Jesus, the lyrics wouldn't be what they are; but at the same time, I don't write about my faith in Christ.

"I feel like a lot of bands like Underoath and This Providence do a great job of talking about their faith on stage every night." Hayley explained, "But for some reason, whatever that is, I don't really feel like that's our calling."

Nonetheless, Paramore is here to stay. Fans are sure to grab hold and never let go of *Riot*! and with the band's humble attitude and charming appeal, they will attract new admiring fans as well.

"We realize we're super blessed and opportunities that so many bands would dream of." Hayley said as if she was reciting the band's mission statement, however genuinely not forced, "Everyone in this band, we just feel like this is a great opportunity to do what we love and have other people enjoy it just as much as we do."

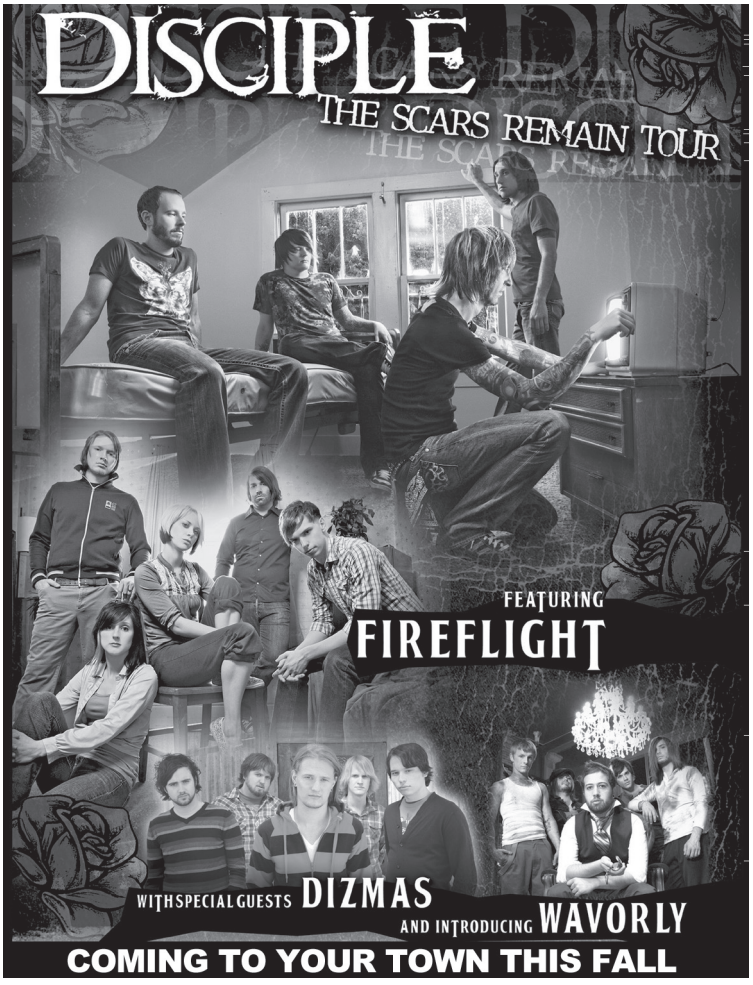
✖

Photos, L-R: [1-3:] DVP; [4:] Amanda Curtis; [at right:] Jenn Smith

Paramore

WHEN YOU LET YOUR HEART WIN

BY AMANDA CURTIS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of
Limp Bizkit
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HARD ROCK/METAL

Evening, morning, and noon I ***cry out*** *in distress, and* ***he hears my voice***

Psalm 55:17

PICK OF THE LITTER

Sophia

I don't think I've ever heard the creed: "I will walk this road with fear and trembling" in a more appropriate way. Almost shaking with passion, these words come screaming out of the speakers at the top volume that Sophia is best served at. It's funny, I get assigned many a hard music album review for CCM Magazine. A couple months ago their editor, Jay, emailed me and asked me if I'd heard of this band and if I'd like to review them. I agreed before I heard a note, and now I'm feeling like CCM scooped HM in an obvious made-for-HM band! Thankfully, Jay assuaged my feelings of shame and regret by saying, "Since you wrote it, you really scooped yourself!" Anyway, this band marries the best gothic/doomy fullness-of-sound that a band like Still Remains brings; along with the lightning-quick aggression of any other hardcore band on the scene. Their mixture of big, operatic gang vocals, however, bring to mind both the fun of a Comeback Kid and the haunting other-worldness of those kids at the end of Underoath's "It's Dangerous Business..." Don't be misled, though, Sophia has enough oomph! and unique creativeness to fully have "their own" sound. If you haven't pick up their 5-song EP yet, do it now. (Doug Van Pelt)
sophiarock.com

2'Shon & The Science of Letting On

What a dance party. "Robo-pop" seems like the most fitting description of this type of music – a good utilization of the synthesizer. Interesting lyrics: "I've got my punk rock ethic and my hip-hop bling bling…" I sure hope some of these songs are supposed to be funny; I would be concerned otherwise. (Jenn Smith)
monkofonic.com

The Valley

The Valley, hailing from Australia, recently moved to Texas to pursue music in the states. Their music is packed with progressive emotion-driven alternating singing and scream dynamics. This band covers all the bases from angst filled breakdowns to sugar laced sing-along parts paired with squealing guitar riffs. Resembles the likes of Chasing Victory and Burden of a Day. (Amanda Curtis)
myspace.com/thevalley

Invisible Image

These dudes play Nu Metal well and hard. Few can pull off this type of music without boring everyone. Continuing with this style of music is pretty bold when it isn't necessarily the most marketable or radio-friendly one at this point in time. (JS)
invisibleimage.net

The Tide

Steve's fresh and clearly talented vox creates an identity to be acknowledged. Written with a breath of fresh air, lyrics are thoughtful and authentic – a notable change among the overpopulated indie rock genre. The Tide artfully combines melodic guitars, appealing keyboard, and assertive but not overpowering drums to paint a vibrant portrait. (AC)
myspace.com/thetideband

Live In Japan

Sit in your soft, vintage sofa chair and rest your head. This soothing Indie Rock helps you unwind. Unconventional yet reputable vocals, relaxed guitars, and an overall tranquil ambience – think Explosions In The Sky. (JS)
liveinjapan.com

PLAYRADIOPLAY!

This is so much fun to listen to. If music were explained in terms of family relations, this would be The Postal Service's loveable, goofy little brother. This 17-year-old Ft. Worth native is an impressive one-manned electro synth-pop project. (JS)
playradioplay.com

The Swellers

The Swellers tactfully create the essence of pop punk with *My Everest*. This head-bobbing album screams to be played windows down, in the summertime breeze, singing alongside your best friend on air guitar while you play drums on the steering wheel. (AC)
theswellers.com

The American Black Lung

Obviously raised in the cool Danzig-style rough 'n' tumble Southern metal vibe, The American Black Lung come flying at you with reckless abandon on the 9-song *Sudden Departure Of Vultures*. (DV)
myspace.com/theamericanblacklung

Struck Last May

Certainly Michael Knott's most bizarre musical offering (and that's saying a lot). It's a gentle indie rock concept/story album that he wrote and performed with Rick McDonough. It's funny, melodic, and quirky to the N-th degree, with odd samples, blips and random sounds. (DV)
myspace.com/strucklastmay

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The Christian & Art

WITH KEMPER CRABB

The Disconnect: Why Evangelicals Make Bad Art (Part the Seventh)

Again in this issue, we continue to consider the question of why, in an America where a large portion of the population (one-fourth to one-fifth, reportedly) claim to be Evangelicals, who believe that Holy Scripture directs believers in "every good work" (1 Tim. 3: 16-17) (which would include the making of art by Christians), the Church has failed so dismally in producing effective and quality art (music, television, dance, film, etc.).

In earlier installments, we discovered that this failure is in large part due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of the Bible by Evangelicals. The twin causes of this ignorance we saw to be, first: laziness motivated by self-worship in the pursuit of pleasure; and, secondly, deficient theology as a result of disregarding the Bible's ethical demands in favor of an emotional feel-good experience.

The surface view of Scripture which flows from these sins results further in the loss of the ability for Evangelicals to see reality (God, themselves, and the world) as it really is. Christian art depends in its creation on a Biblically particularized version of the human experience of God's Created Reality, and the absence of a correct understanding of that reality leads inexorably to inferior, distorted expressions rightly viewed by both Christians and non-Christians as inaccurate and irrelevant representations of the universe in its depth and beauty. Bad theology inevitably leads to bad art.

We began last issue to examine the damage to the artistic enterprise that a defective doctrine of Creation effects. To have an unBiblical view of God's Creation of all things from nothing (Gen.1; John 1: 1-4), which is continually sustained by God's Action (Col. 1: 16-17; Heb. 1: 3), and which always reveals God (Psalm 19: 1-6; Romans 1: 18-23), leads to such errors as a reluctance to use physical, created media (language, the body, paint, musical notes, architecture, etc.) for rendering artistic expressions (at least, doing so without guilt…), a denial of the revelation of God's Existence and Attributes through the created universe (Rom. 1: 18-24), and a denial that matter is not evil in itself, but is to be the arena of the spiritual, wherein Christ's Lordship is to be expressed and advanced in every area of life, rather than only simply in the personal experience of individuals.

We turn now to consider a further implication of the denial (or ignorance) of the fact that God continually mediates Knowledge of Himself through the entire created order (Ps. 19; Rom. 1: 18-23). Scripture teaches in these (and other) passages that the entire universe, both taken together and in its individual parts (as well as in any combination of parts) symbolizes God. The entire world is a Symbol of God.

This means that everything has multiple meanings and that the ultimate meaning of everything is God (thus, everything exhibits both unity and diversity – like the Holy Trinity, Who created these things). For instance, a human can be simultaneously a man, a son, a brother, a judge, a soldier, a citizen, a parishioner, a poet, and the Image of God, with each of these functions/relationships revealing a different aspect or symbolic meaning. Yet the man can show forth any or all of these meanings at any time.

To believe that matter does not communicate multiple meanings symbolically is to flatten things to one dimension, restricting the richly variegated depth of the creation to a single meaning, giving birth to artistic work which lacks nuance, verisimilitude, and the reality of life itself (which would yield, say, a novel wherein the characters seem contrived, puppet-like, and unrealistic, as so many current Christian novels do).

A restriction of created things to a single meaning is also the hallmark of propaganda, which seeks to force information into one arbitrary sequence in an attempt to manipulate or coerce its audience to a single point. Such a belief also leads frequently to the opinion that matter is not important in itself, but is only important as a utilitarian carrier of a message, rather than being seen as a part of the message in itself (as, for instance, the Lord Jesus' Humanity was as integral to Who He Was as was His Divinity, since He was, as the God-Man, both Matter and Spirit).

Since reality cannot legitimately be viewed as uni-dimensional, art of any quality will reflect the depth of the multi-faceted, nuanced life of the world God has created in all its fullness. The more accurate the portrayal of reality (e.g., the truer to Scriptural Reality), the better the art.

[kempercrabb.net]

The way I see it
Chris Wighaman

GARAGE

Do you have a garage? Basement? Attic? You know one of those places in your house where "stuff" gathers. And by "stuff" I mean junk. Junk that you have no idea what to do with because, well, it's junk. We just cleaned out our garage by putting all our "stuff" and honest to goodness junk out on tables, opened the garage door and let total strangers rummage through it with the hopes of finding that one great item that will get them on the Antique Roadshow. Yes, two days in the garage with strangers selling off all those things that don't seem to be good enough to find a place inside my house. If that doesn't sound like a good time to you, well then we have something in common. I've tried to distance myself from this stuff by putting it out in the garage … and, well, now I have to watch random people sift through it. Ugh, junk.

Hebrews 12:1 says "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us." The writer lays out this great scenario where we're surrounded by a giant group of amazing yet flawed people who have risked everything to follow God and they are cheering us on to run this race with Christ. We've got this amazing audience and we're urged to throw off the things that slow us down. You know how running a race in scuba gear is probably a pretty stupid idea? In the same way running this race carrying a ton of junk we don't need only slows us down. This extra baggage isn't necessarily sin, it's simply the things that weigh us down in life. Things like busyness, over commitment, priorities out of order, and lack of discipline. We're supposed to throw these things out. Then the writer encourages us to get rid of the sin that entangles us. Sin is strange. It can start so innocently – even accidentally. Then, before you know it, you are completely wrapped up in something you can't get out of. Like a true house cleaning and garage sale, we are encouraged to throw out the junk that's holding us back. Then we're supposed to run … in Christ we have freedom. Without all the junk we can run like we were meant to. Lastly, we are to persevere, there will be new challenges, temptations, and things to slow us down – but we need to keep going.

Hey, since some pretty great people have gone on before us and shown us how it's done, clean out the closets, garage, attic and anything else, so that you can run freely in Christ!

Devotions
with Greg Tucker

Noah did everything just as God commanded him. Genesis 6:22

In the movie *Evan Almighty*, Steve Carell plays a freshman congressman elected on the promise he would change the world. He just never said how. Then God (Morgan Freeman) appeared with the details, instructing him to build an ark. Throughout his adventure God gives the promises while Evan does the work, and the world is changed in this modern-day Noah story.

It was true thousands of years ago and it's true today: God is in the business of changing the world – it's his primary objective – and in Matthew 6:10 he asks us to have that agenda as well. He calls every Believer to daily obedience, but occasionally taps into one person for a special task. To "build an ark," so to speak.

One ark builder is Paul Karanick. When I first met Paul we were eating breakfast at a Southern California diner. Over bacon and eggs he explained that God called him, a young, middle-classed man, to preach in the Rose Bowl. Since God gave the promise, Paul did the work, and in the months that followed he lined up Barlow Girl, Urban Rescue, Decyfer Down, KJ-52, Leeland, Skillet, The Afters and other heavy hitters for a concert/crusade in one of the nation's largest venues. This ark would cost $100,000 to build.

After hearing Paul talk I was so convinced the man across from me had heard from God, by the end of the meal my film production company had given him $10,000. You see, folks are attracted to a person with vision.

Thousands of HM subscribers will read this article, but there are some who know God has called them to something bigger – to build an ark. He's the man who not only dreams a big dream, but plans on seeing it through to completion. It's not that he's motivated all the time, or that his dream is particularly logical, but God has given him a vision of what can be and he is committed to it.

Maybe you're one of those people. God will save the world through modern day ark builders. His only need is for people like you to respond, day after day, with the one word he longs to hear: "Yes."

[Greg Tucker lives in your computer at HopeCCA.com]

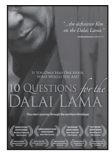
Entertainment reviews
DVDS, BOOKS & GADGETS

01 ONE NIGHT WITH THE KING
GENER&XION

It's amazing how quickly some details of a biblical story you've read dozens of times can get fuzzy when you're put on the spot. I faced this challenge somewhat when watching this movie, as I wanted to judge it as I watched, to see how faithful it stayed to the Scriptures. Without compromising the effort to make it epic on a grand scale (which it very much accomplished), it does tell the story accurately. The most important character development only seemed to take liberties that were pretty much subservient to the pages of Esther. The dramatization of King Xerxes' search for a bride; the tension between him and Esther; and the ironic twist of fate that gets played out on Haman's face are all delightful to watch. Also memorable is the caricature that Tommy Lister plays as Hegai, whose forced accent is perhaps as outlandish as Jar-Jar Binks. Tiffany Dupont's both triumphant and vulnerable moment as Esther – even though it gets foretold in all the trailers – still steals the show. Perhaps all the angles of her adventurous heart prior to the oncoming trouble sets the stage for the viewer to cheer her on as the classic drama unfolds. One of the surprises (at least for me) was how easily it was to grow fond of the non-believing Xerxes, who clearly comes across as virtuous and wise. Overall, it's another soaring flight above and beyond the cheese that's long been associated with "Christian filmmaking." *Doug Van Pelt*

02 NORBIT *DREAMWORKS*
I'd heard this was an awful movie – not even close to the *Doolittle* or *Big Mama* series; but the trailers looked so funny that it was hard to believe the nay-sayers. This time, however, it seems they were spot on. Still riotous at times, which makes the extras more of a bonus, but still, uh ... bad. *DV*

03 PREMONITION *SPHE*
Take *Lake House*, *Groundhog Day*, and maybe *Memento* ... swirl in a blender, and you get one interesting movie. Definitely not a feel-good flick, but one that'll tickle the brain and have you guessing where the plot'll turn next. An alternative ending and lots of explanations in the bonus material helps. *DV*



04 10 QUESTIONS FOR THE DALAI LAMA *MONTEREY*
Surprisingly interesting for a documentary, the viewer is easily caught up in the filmmaker's quest to reach and interview this religious figure. Almost as compelling is the concurrent story about the beleaguered Tibetan people and their struggle with China. Respect for Buddhists comes easier after viewing. *DV*

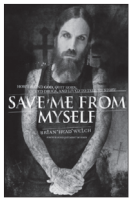
05 APOCALYPTO *TOUCHSTONE*
Escape from the ancient Mayan city (where human sacrifices take place!) with Jaguar Paw back into his thick jungle. Mel Gibson's direction of this film has provided a visually exciting historical thriller that acknowledges ancient Mayan culture. This wouldn't be complete without the rolling severed heads. *Jenn Smith*

06 BLACK SNAKE MOAN *PARAMOUNT*
Set in the deep South, Samuel L. Jackson plays twisted and victimized savior to a wayward Christina Ricci in this sexually explicit tale of abuse, infidelity, addiction, friendship, restoration and forgiveness. It is, however, told in the crudest form and possibly most offensive language possible. *JS*

07 COPYING BEETHOVEN *MGM*
A fictional tale of friendship, and music. Ed Harris masterfully plays awry and unintentional comedic Beethoven, while Anna Holz (Diane Kruger) transcribes scoring notes, overcoming challenges of an unaccepted women maestro. There's an impressive featurette and the deleted scenes comments are good. *AC*

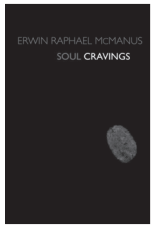
08 THR3E *FOX*
Mix a suspenseful psycho-thriller story with today's typical I-feel-like-a-profiler television watcher, and it should make for a good movie. While not absolutely great, this taunting and clue-leaving killer with a penchant for scriptural riddles makes an ideal case for a local seminary student to get involved. *DV*

	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08
SPIRITUAL RELEVANCY (%)	100	50	100	100	70	100	90	100
OBSCENITIES		46	11		2	53	4	
SCENES OF GORE					23			
NUDITY / SEXUALITY					6	6	2	



Save Me From Myself
Brian "Head" Welch – Harper One

Sometimes trying to make something "safer" for consumption ends up watering down and taking the bite out of the true story. When Brian Welch signed a book deal with the Harper Collins' Harper One imprint, he wisely and successfully bypassed any pressure to declaw his story of some of its power. As a former meth addict, his days in the glorified gutter weren't pretty. His re-telling of the story doesn't glamourize his sin; but instead gives an up-close and personal view of the destructive chemical. Unflinching and raw, this is a rock and roll tale with all the honest-to-goodness spousal abuse, profanity, freaky backstage antics and break-up-to-make-up relational stories that almost took this guy's life. The most refreshing thing about this believer's testimony is that it's not prepackaged happiness that you take with a glass of water and are formulaically inspired. Not even. Welch hit bottom, reached out to Christ, fell again, reached out to Christ, fell again, reached out to Christ. His frailty and vulnerability wasn't too much for His Savior, which is inspirational in its own, dirt-under-the-fingernails sorta way. *Doug Van Pelt*



Soul Cravings
Erwin Raphael McManus – Nelson Books

Some authors are storytellers. Still others are wordsmiths. McManus happens to be both – capturing our attention with tales of real life that are wrapped up with very quotable lessons as modern day proverbs. Broken up into devotional or blog-like tidbits, the chapters are centered on things that really matter: love, intimacy, fear, longings, relationships, security, love, love, and love. Like the title implies, it drives the point home about God creating us with needs and cravings that He is (solely and) more than capable of meeting. With nary a hint of lecturing or preaching, McManus relates to us with his hobbies – movies, popular culture, etc. Who can't help but laugh when he uses the example of the 50-year old womanizer when he's talking about the emptiness of the most popular love substitute – sex. It's like seeing Will Farrell all over again in his relapsed state as "Tank" in *Old School*. It's ultimately sad, but funny to mock as long as it doesn't describe us. When the author does hit close to home (either at himself or the reader), he steadfastly remains gentle as he zeroes in on the truth. RIYL: Don Miller. *DVP*

01

02

03

04

05

06

Gadgets
Logi-Tech, Griffin, Cirrus, & Cardo

(01) Logi-Tech's midline entry into the i-portable speaker system world, **Audio Station Express** ($99) is easily portable with a soft case/handle, a slimmer-than-nano remote and powered by an AC hookup or (gasp!) 6 "AA" batteries. The sound is solid at low volumes, but distorts at metallic levels. (02) LT's **Quick-Cam** ($129) is an easy setup camera/microphone that's small enough for notebook or desktop. While the software control panel is intuitive, its default (but adjustable) setting does hog RAM. (03) Griffin's **iKaraoke** ($49) is slightly impractical in a full room or car setting due to feedback issues, but fun with the free Tune Prompter software. It's most practical (?) use is privately with headphones. Try *that one* on the bus! (04) **TuneJuice 2** ($29) packs a 4-battery power backup that'll add life to (but not revive) your iPod. (05) The Cirrus **Bio-Ears** ($9), form-fit the outer ear canal & resist germs. (06) Cardo has a great add-on for the trendy smartphone – the lightweight **S-2 Wireless Headphones** ($99) allow you to answer the phone with a button or skip music tracks with another as you play free from dangling cords. *DV*

[logitech.com, griffintechnology.com, bioears.com, cardosystems.com]

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What **Bad Brains** Says

WHEN YOU GET TWO BASS PLAYERS TOGETHER TO TALK ABOUT MUSIC, YOU WILL LISTEN TO SOME LIVELY CONVERSATION. SUCH WAS THE CASE WHEN I GOT ON THE PHONE WITH DARRYL JENIFER FROM BAD BRAINS AND TRAA DANIELS FROM P.O.D., WHO WOULD ACT AS OUR INTERVIEW SPECIALIST FOR THIS ISSUE. WHEN ROADRUNNER RECORDS HIT ME UP FOR A STORY ON BAD BRAINS, I COULDN'T PASS IT UP, AND IT WAS ALSO GETTING CLOSE TO A NEW P.O.D. ALBUM RELEASE, SO IT WAS NATURAL TO SEE IF WE COULDN'T HOOK THE TWO BANDS UP FOR THIS INTERVIEW. THANKS TO SOME SUPPORTIVE PUBLICISTS AND SOME WILLING MUSICIANS, WE HAVE THE FOLLOWING INTERVIEW ... WHICH TOUCHED ON MUCH MORE THAN MUSIC, BELIEVE ME!

Photo: Frank Ockenfels 3

Traa: I've got some questions they wanted me to ask and I have some questions of my own. I'm a big fan of Bad Brains, man. I don't know if you know this or not, man, but one of my biggest influences back in the day was you guys' band. I think, being from California – the West Coast, it seems like some of the most innovative groups were from the East Coast. But one of the questions I wanted to ask you, man, is I just wanted to ask you about the new album. How's that coming?

Darryl: Well, it's like through the time that we've been together … I've been saying, the Bad Brains has a life of its own as a musical group. Not so much its members involved, but even back in the late 70s, you could feel the group's got a little cosmic thing, like it lives on its own. You ask me how the record's doing and I say, "Hey, the record is out there to the world. I don't really know how much it sold the first week…" I notice that certain people tend to like it and some people don't like it. But, for me, it's just what we put together – what the Great Spirit inspired us to still come out in 2007. You know, it's not a thing where we're sittin' down and contriving how we wanna do what we wanna do. Bad Brains just sort of happens on its own.

That's what it's about.

You know what I'm saying when I say that? If I was more of a cat that was like more into entertainment, then I might say, "Ah, you know, the record is great! We mighta done this and that," you know, all the (bleep) that goes with a band? But being the Brains is sorta like a brotherhood. You know what I mean? Our history is just so cosmic, for me to answer a question like that, I almost ask it myself: "How *is* it doing?"

Yeah, we get the same questions sometimes, man. And for me, music is spontaneous. It's like, P.O.D… Again, you guys are a big influence, man, so Bad Brains always seemed like a movement. That's what I meant.

Yeah, that's what I'm saying. It's like a Great Spirit movement. That's why I get a little pissed off sometimes when I hear, like, people that don't want to think, like criticizing us about our … we're humans, too – you know what I mean? But it's not on us to do… We're not sitting around saying we want to be influential or have this positive message in our music. During a period of time, where you, like yourself, can say you're inspired. We're not sitting around going, "Hey, we're coming out to inspire people." We're just saying, "Hey, we're gonna put together some riffs like any other band – like any other youth. We're gonna put together some riffs to do what we think and give thanks and praise and now what the Great Spirit does with that energy, that's on God, not us." You know what I mean?

Yeah, yeah. You're just basically being an artist. To me, that's what a lot of it's all about, man. Staying true to the craft and true to yourself. Staying true to what inspired you and what inspires the band. I totally get that. How do you guys feel about putting this out on vinyl, man?

Vinyl? I thought there was some vinyl. Again, it's just something to me, once I'm done with my music; it's like a chef. Once I'm finished, I'm in the kitchen and I put the final garnish on, it goes out to the table, that's all I can say. If they try to make entrees out of it or … you know what I mean? You know what I'm saying? You ask me what's up with vinyl? All I know is I was going to call down there and say, "Yo, I heard you all had some vinyl. Can you send me up a couple copies?"

So, do you guys have any special stories about songs on this album – maybe something that was inspired by an event or something like that?

Well, you see, again that goes back to what I'm saying about the band having a

life of its own. It's like, we were doing some shows back around '98, just playing here or there – HR wanted to do a couple of shows. It got in the wind, in the air, that maybe we should do another record. But it wasn't nothing like where we had a band meeting; because we kind of don't roll like that. It was like in the air. It got in the air that we wanted to make a new record and then I was here one day – chillin' in the crib – and I got a call from Yauch and I said, "Yo, we're thinking about doing a new record." Well, then he started talking about how he can produce it and make us sound how we're supposed to sound. You know how every producer wants to say (they'll do) what the other guy couldn't do. I was like, "Word. Do you got the paper for this? You know what I mean? We need paper to try to do this. You just can't come and do it." The dude put up a studio, got us a little G to fly in people and do what we need to do. But, as far as the creative process, it's almost like me and Doc… I said, "Alright, Yauch, me and Doc, we wanna make the riffs kind of like … not so much do what we used to do, but … I personally wanted people to hear the rock on this and go, "Okay, that's the Bad Brains." If you look at it in the past, normally we try to stay progressive with our music. That's why we're probably not as commercially successful… We always try to stay progressive. If you look at the record, you see *Quickness* get a little technical and then, *I Against I* is kinda like … some people would say "metal" or "funk" or something like that. The Bad Brains sound is like the raw cassette. It's like our first record, *Rocks For Light*. Our first set – that's the Bad Brains sound. All the records after that are us trying to invent. So, with this particular record ... that's reminiscent of the way we first came out. The reggae – of course, we always try to keep that flowing, the way the Great Spirit wants that happening. My sister asked me the other day, "How do you think of all of these riffs?" I told her, "I sit down on my guitar and I say, 'D, what do you like?' Or I say, 'When you step out on that stage and you drop this riff, you want people to say, 'Damn!'" You see what I'm saying? Like any musician – that's no mystery to that. It's just at what level the artist's imagination is making this (bleep). I think of things in a grand, diabolical sense, which is rock music. Probably from listening to something like Return To Forever when I was younger, like listening to groups like Black Sabbath and Return To Forever, so now you've got some sort of doomsday type riff with Black Sabbath, like how their riffs go, like "Sweet Leaf" and "Iron Man" and (bleep); then you've got, like Return To Forever, with their (bleep) that's more … it's rock, but it's progressive. I used to listen to it when I was a kid, so when it comes down to me inventing and creating my own musical movement, I just say, "(bleep), I'm gonna come out like this, and then I'm gonna do some (bleep) like this! And after that, we're gonna do three of 'em, (bleep) 'em up with one of these, and it's done!" See what I mean? You know what I'm talking about – you play. You know exactly what I'm talking about.

I know exactly what you're talking about, man. What I read mostly in what you were saying is the most important thing – which I think a lot of people have lost, man – is you guys are not chasing somebody else's (or) today's interpretation of what rock music is supposed to be. I see a lot of new music isn't so much innovative anymore as it was back in the day. People are trying to chase… Record labels tell them, "Hey, you guys need to put out this kind of music."
Sound like this, sound like that…

"Sound like this music," but what you're telling me is, "Nah, dude, that's not what I'm doing. I'm going to put out what feels good to me. If I was playing this riff, how am I going to feel when I play it? How I'm feeling is what's going to matter – everybody's gonna catch up on that vibe." That's going to be more powerful than trying to play somebody else's style.
Yeah, and you see a lot of musicians, like I'll even say one's name, not that I'm, like, innocent, but a cat like Lenny Kravitz, right? He tends to, like, let his influences be… He bites (steals ideas). I'm influenced by things, but I try to mask and take the essence and the inner core of what my influences are – not like be something that's like, you know, be like that.
[phone call interrupts…]
In the studio today, I'm producing a theme song for the DC United soccer team.

Really?
Yeah, it's, like rock. (chants) "D-C-United!" Some heavy duty stadium (bleep).

Yeah, yesterday I got to do a theme for Conan the Barbarian – it's a trailer for a cartoon movie or something like that.
That's hot!

Yeah, it's pretty hot, man; but it's heavy. It's like theatrical, like spiritual battles and stuff like that.
If you guys ever need any of the Brains type riffage, you've got all my digits, call me up. I've got 'em on stock! I know you guys worked with HR. I don't know what that's like. He's definitely a progressive, creative cat.

Oh, HR, man. I'm telling you, bro. You don't understand – that was like an honor for me. Again, we grew up listening to you guys. A big influence, man; so to have HR walk into the studio with his birds, man…
(laughs) That was back in the days of the birds! You know he got those birds on an airplane once?

Dude, that tripped me out. I'm waiting for HR to show up, man, and homeboy shows up. Some people come in with a dog or a cat, but that dude comes in with birds, bro. That's some creative stuff right there.
People trip on him, man; but one thing about HR: he's a free dude! He lives free and God bless him, you know what I'm saying. He's a progressive dude, boy, I tell you!

One other question I wanted to ask you, man, and this is one that really hits home with me, man: What is it like being African American in rock music? Like, you know, people would not necessarily say it's a genre of our culture, but I beg to differ, man, because back in the day, we started where it evolved – a lot of that stuff. Whether it be Fats Domino…
To me, I'm just a cat that likes a lot of different types of (bleep). And all of us are like that. It's not so much being black or white. We're from DC, we're supposed to play go-go. DC got our own form of punk music indigenous to this area. For me, to like rock music as a teenager in the 70s, Jimi Hendrix… Even though I have no Hendrix influences. I never really listened to Hendrix records and stuff like that, like in rock. I mainly listened to Led Zeppelin or something… Or like Grand Funk or some (bleep). Hendrix to me was like blues to me. It was like psychedelic blues. Blues wasn't really my thing growing up, but like Sly and Graham Central Station and Mother's Finest and the Bar-Kays. There's a lot of heavy metal influence in rock. Rock is not white music. It got mixed up somehow. I guess if you check it out chronologically, the Rolling Stones … The British Invasion sorta kinda gave rock and heavy metal a white rock thing. Heavy metal could be white, but rock music is really – if you want to get into racial (bleep) is black music to begin with. It's like you were saying, Little Richard, Fats Domino, my man Chuck Berry – mad rock. You see somebody going across the stage back in the day with the duck walk and all that. The whole thing to me, it's like, being black… There's many spectrums. Some black people want to listen to Sun Ra. It depends upon how far your intellect takes you with music and art. Some black people can go a little bit to rock. Maybe they like Living Colour. That's about as far as rock they can go. Some people might go all the way to Bad Brains or all the way into Sun Ra ... into some, "Wow, how far do you wanna go?" I don't think it's a black/white thing. I think it's more like just being versatile with your listening and being a smart fan of music; and not being a bonehead fan of music, where all you like and appreciate is what the hell you know. I didn't come up like that. Like I said before, I grew up listening to… I was blessed to be able to want to listen, like, 'I'll put on some Sly. I'll go to Graham Central Station shows. I'll go to where they say, the white boys (are) playing. I'll see the Ramones.' You know what I mean? I enjoy all that. Colorblindly, not so much being, 'I'm a black dude in a white world or some (bleep). I don't even care, really. I'm just jay up in your club – from when I was young. So, that's why sometimes people look at me funny when I don't endorse stuff like Afro-Punk or the black rock coalition and stuff like that. They say, "Don't say nothing to D, because he ain't about that…" It's really because I don't like when color gets involved. I don't even like when they say, "United Negro College Fund." Although I know it helps, you know, I know what it means and all that. It's just something about trying to put in … "Okay, this is something particular for me, or somebody black…" I'd rather them just say, "United Youth College Fund." For the youth, you know what I mean? Because there's a strong message, even with Bob Marley or Haile Selassie's speech is a strong message. It's simple: "Until the color of a man's skin is no more significant than the color of his eyes, there will be problems, wars." I'm like somebody that's trying to think that out for a long time – not consciously, but that's the way I live. I've been colorblind. I've got people that say, "How you grow up in a Bad Brains?" I'll be in a club full of white people and wouldn't even know. And I wouldn't be white or acting white, either! See what I'm saying? Because the white people that I'm around, when I was coming up, in the venues and places that I would be, that people would say was white, they weren't white boys or Rollins or Ian MacKaye and the chic chicks on our scene. We was all just punks – alternative-thinking youth. But from the outsider, they look in and say, "Oh, damn! How are you just a black dude in that white crowd?" Once a black man starts thinking that, then you're *that*. And that's why, when I seen that movie, *Afropunk*, it kind of made me rebel against it, because it was everything I wasn't. I didn't want to see black kids talking with their white things (imitates a whiny, nerdy voice)" "I grew up in the suburbs and people think I'm white, because I'm smart or whatever."

That's not your experience, bro.
Right! But I'm just saying to the Afro-Punk in particular: That they shouldn't … don't feel your blackness. Feel your humanity. Your blackness is your natural… You're black. It's natural fact. There's no way around that.

You're not going to change nothing just by putting on clothes or anything.
Exactly! So, I'm just saying to the youth of today, "Be the youth of today," like when Marley in his songs... That's who he's singing to. He's singing to the youth of the world, not particularly the black youth or the Chinese youth or the white youth.

It was to everybody, man.
Yeah, so that's what I'm saying, you know. So, when you ask me, "Hot damn, brother! How does it feel?" Yo, when I was young, back in the 70s, back in DC, they used to call me Elvis, because I used to wear leather pants. They'd tease me and say, "Darryl, you're a white boy. Give me some of that good weed that a white boy…" They'd say because I'd just… Really, all it was was the Great Spirit blessing down with, like, what it's like to be an open-minded youth and enjoy all the walks. I grew up listening to jazz, Ramsey Lewis. I've been to shows. Like Mother's Finest. People tell me about black rock, how 'bout Mother's Finest?

That's something I was going to tell you. I grew up listening to Return Forever and I grew up listening to… Their bass player was a big influence to me. When I joined P.O.D. I never dreamed I'd be playing rock music.
You're just like me, man.

It didn't come from that, but the thing that changed me is somebody popped in… I said, "Who is this?" and I looked and all ya'll was brothers. I didn't think it could be done like that. I didn't think it could be done to that level. Because I'd never seen it done. I grew up in Cleveland.
That's what I'm saying with the Great Spirit, but when I tell you that the band is a cosmic force that moves on its own and when I get upset when people try to get on us about little dumb things that are on earth, they don't know that the pinnacle – the apex of what Bad Brains really meant – was to show during that period of time just exactly what you experienced. That happened all around. The Beastie Boys: 'if they black and play punk, (bleep) I can be white and rap!' Other groups, too… But that wasn't the Bad Brains! That's the Great Spirit using Bad Brains as a vehicle to show the world, "Hey, look! All people can do all this stuff. Look, I've got four black dudes from DC." You coulda made us from any other city. DC is the blackest city. It's called "Chocolate City." 87% during that time. The only thing white about Washington DC was Capitol Hill. And that's what Bad Brains came up in...

Hey, let me ask you one more question, dude. This'll probably be the last one, man. This is a big one, too. A lot of people… I think it's important, man. To have an open-ended discussion on this situation – about your faith and religion, man. In Bad Brains, maybe you'll go in detail…
Let me explain. First of all, I'm not involved in any religion. That's another thing that had to – that wisdom had to bestow upon me and us. We're not a religion. Rasta is not a religion.

Let me re-phrase that, because that was something that was written here; because I feel the same way, man. Your spirituality…
Right. Our faith… My faith is a way of life that I live. I believe in the unseen. I believe in the Great Spirit. I believe in the breath of life. We all do. We're very spiritually motivated. We're not… We're the farthest thing from atheist or someone that won't … will question their own intellect. I will believe in the unseen. You don't have to tell me, "Well, D, 2+2 is 4." I'll be like, "Yo, if the Great Spirit says it's 5, then I believe." You see, it's about faith – not so much about religion. Religion's about… I ain't got to tell you. Religion is a money thing. It's something people need to… I don't have a church. My body is my temple. You know what I mean? I try to live right by the simple creed of life – simple! Nothing major: "Be good to the people you meet. Try to be patient." You know what I mean? Try to be understanding. Try to be kind. You know what I mean? Try to be…

Nah, man. We live by that exact same thing…
It's so simple. People get it out there. The other day I saw a guy. I was on a plane. It wasn't the other day – it was about a year and a half… Anyway, I saw a guy pull out his muslim, pull out a rug, 4 o'clock, facing different areas. I'm not saying something that's against other religions and faiths do to make them feel like they're getting closer to God. I'm just saying that, for me, it's simple. I look in the sky. I say, "Give thanks and praise." I look to the ground – to the earth – I say, "Give thanks and praise." I look all around. It ain't even about up in the sky, either? I just give thanks and praise for the breath of life that I chose in my life as a human being to have faith and not be a cat just like, "Well, you're crazy to believe in this god or whatever you think." Well, you know, I chose to have faith. I don't particularly get into, like, God and all that. You notice how I say, "The Great Spirit?" I don't particularly like to get into Allah and Jesus and Jah or Ja-Ja even. I stick with the Great Spirit.

Ja-Ja is used a lot in Rastafari…
Well, Rasta's like to use "Ja" – Jahoviah, coming from a Christian text. But through my personal growth, I've learned that I want to even be more – that humble that I don't know the Great Spirit's name. There's many names. They say you know His Name. That's why even in the Christian text they took out when they had Jehovah and Yahweh. They put God. Simply "God." 3,000 times. But God is just like saying, "Mister Earth, Sir." So, I like to go like a Native American to the Great Spirit. That rings true to me. Out of the spirit, this is the greatest one. You know what I'm saying? As a matter of fact, there ain't even no other spirit. That's when they say, "One love." One-ness. I believe in a one-ness. I don't believe in, like, say for instance… I personally don't believe in, like, deity and this god and that god and his god and our god. If some people do, that's cool. As long as their heart and intentions is one of love. See what I mean? There's going to be many roads that go to the Great Spirit. So, as long as your heart is of love, then come on! If in due season that you learn … or maybe I'll learn. You know, who knows? But remain humble … until the due season comes for us to learn whatever it is we're supposed to learn, remain humble.

I think that's the most important thing – to learn. Spiritually, in my own relationship with God, you know, it's being quiet. Being quick to listen and slow to speak, man. A lot of people, they don't take the time to listen and understand where another person is coming from or where they're at, man – before you start going into who they are. I agree with you, man, that love is supreme, man. When it comes down to it…
Love will do it, man. All we've gotta do is be patient, keep giving thanks, and it's all good, man. That's like Bob. You see, Bob Marley was a prophet. People take him for granted. You see, we had the song, "Everything's Gonna Be Alright." That's real! That's speaking to a lot of things, like, "Don't labor your spirit. Have faith in the Great Spirit. Everything's gonna be alright." That don't mean be lazy and turn a blind's eye to things, either. But it also keeps and wants to reinforce, "Hey, Ja-Ja are the Conqueror." The Great Spirit is the Conqueror. Not mankind, not nothing you say. You know what I mean? That's just in the belief of faith – whatever your faith is. Some people don't believe in that. They say, "You sound like a hippie or something, dude. Let's see Ja-Ja conquer these missiles coming over the hill." You know what I mean? That's a man relying on a man. That's all a man involved in a man's world. Hey, I'm not in that world.

Well, man, dude. You keep on being you, bro. Thank you again, so much for being an influence on me as a musician and our band, inspiring us musically to not be afraid to be different, man. To step outside the box and play the music, man.
It's great. Anytime you want some of those stock riffs, holla at me, kid!

I need to get your digits, man.
Anytime you need anything – if you're on the East Coast or Woodstock, holler at me.

✖

"...Until the color of a man's skin is no more significant than the color of his eyes, there will be problems, wars..."

Faces To V

BY AMANDA CURTIS

A Plea For Purging

A Plea For Purging, self-entitled unofficial kings of band pranks, is willing to do anything it takes to secure their throne. Vocalist Andy Atkins goes into additional detail about what exactly it takes to lock down the throne: "I won't do into too much detail, but there have been cases where human feces have come into play. That's as far as I'm going."

As for their music, A Plea For Purging isn't joking about seriously rocking out. With two self-released EP's under their belt, the band is ready to push forward. Andy explains what's to be expected on their first full length out on Facedown in October, "Lots of pinch harms, trem drives, and chugs that will turn concrete into gravel."

Many Christian bands have dealt with persecution and it's sure to continue, specifically referring to criticism about the band's name. Like true champs, A Plea For Purging marches onward. "It's our prayer or our cry for God's cleansing and beauty." Andy sarcastically adds, "Most people think that we're really into bulimia, but if you take a look at our photos, you can clearly see that isn't the case."

The ability to maintain a sense of humor is a valuable asset. As Aaron Eckermann, drummer, put it, "We also like playing metal. Plain and simple." A Plea For Purging has serious plans ahead, John Wand, bass, addressed the band's motives and objectives musically and personally. "Besides complete and total world domination, as a band our sole purpose is to spread the love of Jesus. And, of course, we are always challenging ourselves to be better musicians. So, hopefully with this record we will speak some bit of truth to the world, and have a few killer metal anthems."

The Vein

Meet The Vein, a soulful psychedelic outfit from Los Angeles. The Vein just successfully launched their first album entitled, *Monsters and Men,* in hopes their music will withstand the test of time. "Our sound incorporates all the great things that have been missing from popular music for the last 30-35 years – with the exception of a handful of bands." Vocalist, Jake Lucas illustrates the elements integrated into the album, "We are an indie band without an indie sound. We can get real heavy – especially live – but we're certainly not a metal band. I guess we're a classic rock band from 2007."

Jake explained how the band felt free to create whatever they wanted, without obligation or pressure to make a certain album. "We made this record to make political statements, reveal personal truths and express ourselves musically." Jake encourages fans to take whatever they want from their music. "Hopefully, some people take away our political messages on songs like 'Ruled in Darkness' or 'America's Burning,' but if not it's fine. Whatever someone gets from it, is what rings true to them and whatever that may be, is fine with us."

Watch

Impending Doom

When you think death metal, first thing to mind isn't usually Jesus Christ. However, the guys of Impending Doom aren't afraid of the world of death metal, known for being evil and God free. Instead, they strike back by using their band as a ministry. "The name means without Jesus as your savior this is your impending doom, without God you cannot be saved." David Sittig, bass, expresses the meaning behind the name. "We never force anything down your throat; we aren't those kind of people. We respect each and every one of you and your beliefs, but we put it out there nonetheless."

David elaborates on the band's identity with Christ. "Being a Christian band is the only thing this band has; without God we are nothing, He has brought this band so far and has continually blessed us when we don't deserve it. We are a ministry, touring is our mission trip, we go on the road to tell people about Jesus."

Lastly, David adds, "Personally, being a Christian is the greatest thing ever. You are in God's hands, nothing can happen to you that He doesn't let happen, He loves each and everyone of you."

Impending Doom is releasing their debut album, *Nailed. Dead. Risen*, on Facedown Records September 4th.

Remembrance

Remembrance is out to turn heads with their newest release, *Beyond the Scope of Reason*.

"Our first major goal was to come out with a quality album that was different than everything else out there right now. We knew as we recorded that, this was it." Adam, vocalist, explained, "The second goal behind the album was to offer hope to people. As the main lyricist for the band, I wanted to offer people lyrics that contained substance. *Beyond the Scope of Reason* describes the idea of faith. When everything seems to be going down the tubes and nothing seems to be going right, it takes going outside of our own understand in order to grasp onto faith and know that God will come through despite what you are experiencing in the physical."

Adam went on to explain Remembrance's distinctive writing style; each member of the band contributes to the music. "We consciously seek out a way to tag each song with our own little tweak that either throws the listener off or keeps their interest peaked with a 'what's coming next?' mentality."

Adam attempts to describe the band's sound with many components merging together to fashion each song ... it can't be summed up within a single genre. "We're not southern metal, but we have a couple southern metal riffs. We're not a breakdown or a two-step band, but we incorporate them in different ways." We never want to become repetitive with our music."

The Blue Letter

This band gladly waltzes down the road less traveled. With elegance and refinement, but without losing their edge, The Blue Letter beautifully weaves swaying melodies with tasteful post-hardcore elements to craft an exclusive style distinctively their own. "*Prima Facie* is probably the album that really best sums up our sound as a band." Silas Zdybel, drums and vocals, illustrates, "The album is full of tempo and time changes as well as being very dynamic."

Dan Shebaylo, guitar and vocals, explains the band originally started off as a seven-piece and has since trimmed down to a three-piece with every intention to keep it that way.

"We have been playing in this line-up now for about two years, and have just really been learning to feed off of each other's ideas and we've been trying to push each other as much as possible." Dan, frequently referred to as "Dandalf" due to his resemblance to Gandalf (*LOTR*) and frequent card tricks, explains: "Before, with previous material, we would just write some riffs or parts and put them all together in a song then just to make it work. This time we really tried to pay attention to song structure and how each part fit together."

✖

Eisley
NORMAL IS RELATIVE
BY ADAM ROBINSON

MUSIC
Combinations, the long-awaited new album from Tyler, Texas' power-rock band, Eisley, is sterling. It delivers complex, girly harmonies all loaded up with counterpoint that waft up and around the top of your bedroom. The record is engineered to a pristine point, shuttering with top notch drums, massive BGVs and stop-on-a-dime arrangements that remind me of the poet Wallace Stevens' musing, "I do not know which to prefer, the blackbird singing or just after." Which is to say that even the spaces between the songs on *Combinations* are highlighted by Richard Gibbs' masterful production.

Which isn't to say that this is a great album. It is tidy, even if unbalanced in track order (side A is the rocking side, which was a cool thing to do back when albums actually had sides). Songs like the title track are startling in their execution, like when you hear the trumpet fade at the end and then think, "Wait, there was a trumpet in that song?" I mean, I dig that. And I dig some of the toss-off lyrics, like the line in "Invasion," which gives away so much: "This won't hurt a bit."

It sure doesn't, but I want it to sting just a little. I'd prefer a twinge of pain to the barrage of syrupy, cloying vocals that start and start and just don't stop. Too much beauty brought in rondo format (you know, round, as in "Row, Row, Row Your Boat") makes me wonder if these songs were written in the back seat of the family wagon.

AND LIFE
But it was a real treat and a pleasure to call up the DuPree household and find three-fifths of the Eisley members on hand to chat it up. And after the good people at Warner Bros made sure we had the best possible phone connection, it came across loud-and-clear that this outfit wasn't toting the traditional band bag. They're the family that plays together – and so I guess that means they stay together, too.

But they ain't stuck together; they really like each other. Eisley (named, somewhere along the way, after the space town in *Star Wars* [That's a little nugget I dug up from the halls of Wikipedia]) consists of three sisters, a brother, and a cousin – a family band. Given the quintet's heredity, combined with their young age, I initially thought they were the quintessential "manufactured pop band." Get it? Manufactured, as in birthed, by Ma and Pa DuPree. In fact, father Boyd DuPree's role continues past conception; he's the tour manager and his "Tales from Trolleywood" blog is a treasure trove for all things Eisley. (He even offers journalists a talking point with which to begin articles about the band. I'm going to resist using it, though, on account of there's gambling involved.)

The truth is that the members of Eisley have a genuine and appealing fondness for each other, and they look forward to the occasions when they hang out – which, apparently, is all the time. Weston (21, drums) says that he's been around his sisters his entire life, that it's all he's ever known, and so the only thing that would be weirder than hanging out with his sibs constantly would be not hanging out with them. He's even spent his last five or six birthdays on tour, he notes.

So I hope it's not gonna start a feud when I quote Sherri (23, guitar), who confirmed, laughing, "We hang out every day. It's pretty sick." But it doesn't seem that sick. I mean, sure, they were home schooled, Stacy (18, keyboards) revealed, and they share the same friends, notes Sherri, but I was relieved to hear that they do still argue and disagree sometimes. It's not like that's a badge of honor, of course, but for a group of people who share so much, so totally, it's affirming to know that they aren't candy coated freaks, but that they can be real, too.

And such a way of life is attractive. For behold: two of the sisters, Sherri and Chauntelle, are on the verge of new unions. In a much-discussed rock wedding, Sherri married Chad Gilbert, of New Found Glory fame, in March. Chauntelle (25, guitar) has plans to yoke up with Adam Lazzara, from Taking Back Sunday, next year. Sherri reports that Chad, who's from Coral Springs, is adjusting to the DuPree lifestyle in Tyler just fine, thank you; although naturally it's a drag for the young couple to endure tours apart. But true to form, when Chad and NFG are on the road, Sherri turns to her sisters for company. They watch DVDs together at Sherri's house, and swim at the parents', and they hang out in the quiet town of Tyler.

AND MUSIC
And they like to rock. (Phew! I'm glad to escape the paparazzo stuff of that last paragraph with my typing fingers intact. I'm sure the marriages of rock stars is infinitely interesting, but it doesn't really seem like our business, huh? Sure, Sherri wasn't at all hesitant to discuss her relationship with Chad – she pointed out that around Tyler, her hometown of 17 years, she can move incognito, while Chad gets recognized often – but, I make it a point of pride that HM readers are typically more interested in the music than the buzz.) Friday nights Eisley set up their gear in their church and do what they get paid for, working up new material as they prepare to hit the road again. Yep, that's right – they rehearse in their church. There's a nugget you won't find on Wikipedia, but I think it's one of the most interesting, likable things about Eisley. I find it affirming that a band with more myspace page views than the population of some countries, that a band with the funds of a major label (whom they pretty openly adore – see "Tales of Trolleywood"), that jets first-class to crème de la crème photoshoots, still uses their church as their practice space.

Eisley are excited about the new album. It means new, fresh songs to take out on the road to supplement the last record cycle, as Weston put it. It means getting out on the road. The release of *Combinations* has been delayed a few times, which has afforded the DuPrees more time with their feet in the pool, but now they're pretty unanimously eager to get in the van. I'm sure it'll be a fun trip, filled with family singing.

✖

Photo: Miranda Penn Purin

AS CITIES BURN

BY JENN SMITH

Even though they've lost a vocalist and almost ended the band over a year ago, As Cities Burn decided to stick together and write their second album, *Come Now Sleep*. Cody Bonnette, who did some vocals for their last album, has become the new vocalist "by default," as he puts it. Pascal, who used to play bass also left the band. Colin, who used to play guitar, now plays bass and Cody has taken on guitar, and they also have a new guitarist – Chris Lott. Cody told me all about this as the band was driving from Baton Rouge to Nashville where Paramore's CD release show was taking place that night.

"I don't know, none of us have ever really been super into the whole hardcore scene; we just kind of somehow ended up there. We like it a lot, but we just don't really listen to that much of that music," says Cody. He was explaining to me the difference between *Son, I Loved You at Your Darkest* and *Come Now Sleep*. Their new album consists mainly of melodic singing and no screaming at all, as opposed to their last one. "I feel like it has the same 'As Cities Burn' feel to it. It's not as heavy, for sure, but has the same feel, like I said," says Cody.

Cody told me that the title *Come Now Sleep* came from a line from "Timothy," the last song of the album. "The last song on our CD is about our friend Tim, who committed suicide about a year and a half ago. It was kind of a song that was written just kind of in coping with that sort of thing – the loss of a friend," he said.

Along with that song, a lot of the other songs are about the afterlife and questions that arise from that. Cody reflected upon what he felt was unjustified socio-spiritual behavior he witnessed in a "strict" church he attended when he was younger. The song "Hoard" is sort of a response to those things. "And I saw a few kids kind of stray and I saw these kids get shunned and really looked down upon, and we were taught that was okay."

"I felt that the way I was brought up was just a lot (of) people focusing on the wrong things – just like what someone was or wasn't doing, rather than the condition of their heart while they were doing it."

I asked Cody what he thought the main lyrical differences were between ACB's last album and their new one. "I feel like our last CD, maybe a lot of Christians connected with it, because it has a lot of stuff ... like, it worships God and confession to God. And our new one has a lot of that, but kind of on the opposite end as well. There's a lot of questioning and just being honest with God."

ACB's heartbeat is relating to other people. It is what motivates them to keep doing what they're doing – making music. "The last tour we did wasn't really the biggest tour that we've done. But the kids that came out were just awesome. I would really rather play for a hundred kids or fifty kids that were really passionate about being there about, like, our music and whatever message that has connected with them than hundreds of kids that just kind of want to be there to hang out with their friends or that just don't have anything better to do. That's my favorite part – just kind of connecting with people and hanging out with kids before and after the shows."

Being told who you are

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12 STONES

BY DAN MACINTOSH

If the band 12 Stones preaches anything, it is empathy. The act's third CD, *Anthem for the Underdog*, is offered up to those who find themselves fighting against seemingly insurmountable odds. "We wanted to write a record for all different types of situations; whatever it is that holds people down and makes them feel small," vocalist Paul McCoy explains, on break from band practice. McCoy can boldly hold out sure hope to society's underdogs, because he knows exactly how they feel.

"It's a very competitive industry and when you don't sell a lot of records, it's hard to get notoriety, it's hard to get shows," he explains. Being the underdog invariably makes you try all the harder to succeed. "We feel like every time we take the stage we want to go give 150% and make whoever plays with us work just as hard," he adds.

The band took a full year off from the road to concentrate on raising families, and in McCoy's case, also write songs for the current album. But now that 12 Stones is back on the tour bus again, the group has taken up multitask touring – to coin a phrase.

"We're gonna be on two different tours at the same time," the real (busy) McCoy explains. "During the week we'll be touring with Saliva and Puddle Of Mud, and on the weekends we'll be touring with Chris Daughtry from *American Idol*. The thing that's good is that the routings kind of stay together. We'll be able to jump back and forth easily and keep our schedules full."

Although the group is still an opening act, even with three albums under its belt, McCoy does not sound frustrated when describing the band's relatively limited fortunes. Some rare acts experience overnight success, such as *Idol* contestant Chris Daughtry, but most artists need to pay their dues first.

"I got signed when I was nineteen years old; I'm twenty-five now," McCoy begins, putting it all into perspective. "I'm married. I have a beautiful little girl. I learned over time you're going to get out what you put into it. We tried really hard. We took some time off to do family and really try to write a strong record. I really think it paid off. We understand it's a tough business and we really have to work hard to be successful. And we've learned how to balance that pretty well."

Even though the band was apart from each other for a year, it hardly lost a beat. McCoy had started to write the music for "Anthem for the Underdog," the CD's title track, yet hadn't come up with a melody and lyrics. Then song's completion only came about when the band reconvened at a friend's practice studio.

"I showed 'em the music and we wrote "Anthem for the Underdog" that afternoon, just jamming in the room – finally getting to play together as a band again for the first time in probably about a year," McCoy recalls. Not only did McCoy and his fellow band mates like what they created that day, but other bands rehearsing nearby also recognized this fine song the moment they heard it. "A couple of the other bands came over and said, 'What was that? That was awesome! That was an awesome song!' And we kind of looked at 'em and went, 'That was cool, man.'"

For McCoy, this renewed creative experience was like drinking deeply from the fountain of youth. "You get that feeling like you're nineteen again," McCoy comments. "And it's funny to say, because I'm only twenty-five. And by all stretches I'm still a young guy." This sudden burst of creativity was a sign of good things to come. "You feel like you want every album to be your breakout album. But I think this album is our best shot at it. I think a lot of people will be able to connect to this."

Who knows, perhaps this band with its anthem for the underdog will soon be an underdog no longer.

12stones.com

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WORKING HARD FOR BANDS

HARDNEWS

Page seventy-one

Flee The Seen

BY JENN SMITH

Flee The Seen is maintaining momentum. Right after ending their last tour in December of '06, they decided to let front woman Kim Anderson's attention to be undivided towards her vocals by adding bassist Luke Dills to their mix a month later.

"We were always a four-piece band for the last three years and I sang and played bass at the same time. And in January we made the decision to bring on a bass player, so I could express myself more lyrically, because a lot of times I felt like I was just splitting myself," says Kim. "It is always interesting kind of reworking a band that you've been working one way with for three years."

In December of 2005, Facedown Records signed FTS with their self-recorded, self-mixed and mastered album *When Doubt Becomes the New Addiction*, then released it as-is three months later. The day after the release, FTS hit the road for almost three solid months of touring and then toured as much as possible the rest of the year. Afterwards, they began writing for their upcoming record for the next six months. "It happened, I'd say, literally overnight," says Kim.

When Doubt Becomes the New Addiction was an assemblage of what Flee the Seen had been writing their previous two years or so as a band. Kim explained, "So, there's a lot of variety on that record. And we were still trying to figure out, 'What do we want to sound like? What do we like?'" After a year of touring, the members of FTS were able to sort of filter out what they didn't like about what they had been doing musically. "So we're kind of focusing more on what we do, but just doing it better."

Lyrically, Kim now knows that what she writes about "is going to be around longer than my feelings towards that situation. For the next two years, I'm going to have to sing about it every single night. So it has got to be something I can apply beyond a specific instance. For example, I have a song and it's about how I dealt with a betrayal in my life. But instead of singing about specifically what happened with me and that person, I was like, 'How can I make this the bigger picture?' What I drew from, I went to the Gospels and read about Judas – that's the ultimate betrayal – and kind of applied that setting and that story to the song."

News bullets

Champion Recordings is headed by **Ryan Conley**, who many know as the drummer for the now defunct Tooth and Nail band **Terminal** (Now drumming for **Oh, Sleeper**. Champion's first release is a 2-disc compilation to benefit the Invisible Children organization entitled *Fight Back!* The album features music from labels: Champion, Doll House, Blood & Ink, Scotoma, and more.

For their first video, **The Showdown** brought in Doug Spangenberg, who has directed videos for **Norma Jean**, Terror, and Lamb of God. The video reflects the band's 80s style and features some serious explosions. Frontman **David Bunton** said, "This music video captures the true spirit and feel of The Showdown. No holds barred, heavy metal, pyro, and headbanging. That's what we're all about. The goal for our first video was to give people a small taste of how rude we can be live. Heavy metal is plugged in and loud. Heavy metal is the law." Spangenberg said, "I was amped on the song as soon as I heard it. We kept it simple and shot the band shredding their faces off in a field with a (bleep) of pyro. In retrospect, I'm surprised they made it out with only light singe marks."

Sinead O'Connor sold out the two largest cities in the US. Her show in Los Angeles on June 19th at the Silent Movie Theatre sold out in four minutes as well as her New York City show at Joe's Pub on June 26th all on the same day as the US release of *Theology*. All tickets were gone before shows were even fully announced.

Between The Trees newest video for "The Way She Feels" has been adopted by To Write Love On Her Arms to help spread the word about depression and cutting.

Welcomed to the new Smashing Pumkins line-up are: **Jeff Schroeder** (guitar), formally of **Lassie Foundation** and **The Violet Burning**, as well as, **Ginger Reyes** (bass), who you may recognize from **Halo Friendlies**.

Jonah33

BY MATT CONNER

Them's fighting words. For Vince Lichlyter and the members of Jonah33, that's exactly what their latest release, *The Heart of War*, is intended to be and what it required for the band to get there.

After years with Ardent Records, the modern-now-turned-hard-rockers were dropped in what Vince terms "completely a good thing" over and over in a recent interview after ownership at the label prayed about their involvement with them. After depressing days spent questioning God's direction, a gift in the form of a new van turned the tide that eventually landed Jonah33 on Ares Records.

With their newfound freedom, the quartet spread their wings into territory long awaited. During their days in the Christian market, Lichlyter says the band was not able to state their opinions, play where they wanted or even fully explore the musical styles they preferred. "I was wanting to go play prisons and wanting to go play clubs and stuff and secular venues and he was wanting me to put worship tunes on my record."

Now, the band can call it like they see it. On *The Heart of War*, Lichlyter explains that it's not about the war you might think it is, but instead on the greater spiritual war we are all involved in.

"The church these days, as far as music goes, is just so consumed by the worship movement. So this is our little niche in the wall of reminding people that it's not about a worship movement or selling records…It's deeper than that. There's more to it than that. It's warfare. It's not about selling records with worship music in it."

The message is not the only thing that's more aggressive. Jonah33 does their best hardcore impersonations on *The Heart of War* with Lichlyter screaming and venting with more angst than ever.

"We got to do this ourselves," says Lichlyter. "We didn't have any industry people saying, 'You should do this.' So basically what we did is take two years of pent up frustration – not necessarily towards the industry, but toward our situation and what God was showing us and what we weren't allowed to say on the record – we took all of that and put it to tape."

Still the band remains true to their identity and calling. Lichlyter realizes, "This whole thing has been God. It's not like we piped up and said, 'Screw the Christian music market. Let's go secular.' God has just been opening up door after door after door."

Red has been selected to have their single, "Breathe Into Me", featured in Apple's Retail Store listening stations across the country.

Operators of many the nation's largest multi-day Christian music festivals gathered together in Nashville recently for the Christian Festival Association's annual meeting. The goal of the Association is to help the independent festival organizations grow both spiritually and fiscally, so that more lives can be changed for the glory of God. At the meeting, the members voted to expand the Association's membership to twenty-three events, with the addition of Hills Alive in South Dakota and Winterfest in Virginia.

Bread of Stone helped distribute over 600 Bibles to interested individuals who made commitments to Christ during their concerts on *The LifeLight Tour* with **Phil Joel**.

After finishing an acoustic tour with **Emery** and Surrogate, **Ruth** will be opening act for **Switchfoot** and **Relient K**'s 36-city tour.

Until June will be featured on the upcoming third season edition of *Grey's Anatomy* box-set collection, with their song "What I've Done."

Rise Records has sold out their first ever packaged national tour. The US tour, featuring **Drop Dead Gorgeous**, **The Devil Wears Prada**, **Dance Gavin Dance**, and **At the Throne of Judgment**, started the beginning of June.

Within the first week of **Paramore**'s *Riot!* release, the album has entered the Billboard 200 at #20 with over 42,000 units sold, marking the band's best-ever sales week, and one of the highest sales and chart debuts for Fueled By Ramen (second only to Fall Out Boy). The album hit #1 on the iTunes Alternative Albums chart, while ranking among iTunes' overall Top 10.

Jimmy Ryan (ex-Haste The Day) has a new band called **Cry Of The Afflicted**.

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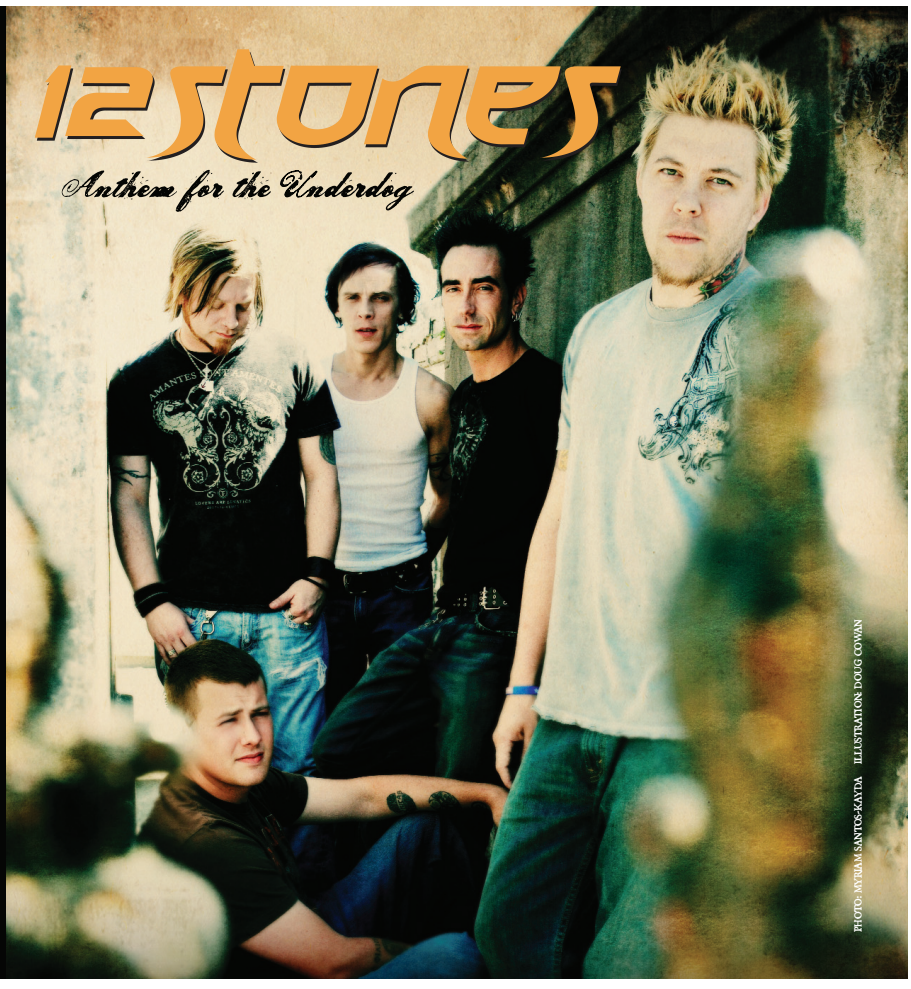

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EDITOR/PUBLISHER **Doug Van Pelt**
OFFICE MANAGER **Charlotta Van Pelt**
MKTG & ADS **John J. Thompson**
James Harrington, Erin Lee
INTERNS **Amanda Curtis, Jenn Smith**

CONTR EDITORS **Kemper Crabb, Josh Niemyjski, Jamie Lee Rake, Greg Tucker, Chris Wighiman**

CONTRIBUTORS **Matt Conner, Jeffrey Ellinger, Dan Frazier, Tim Hallila, Daniel Jesse, Kern County Kid, Steven Losey, Dan MacIntosh, Paul Q-Pek, Adam Robinson, Dr. Tony Shore, David Stagg**

COVER PHOTOS **Stephanie Cabral** (As I Lay Dying)
Josh V. Rothstein (Paramore)
MESSAGE PAGE **Tim Hallila**

PROOFREADERS **Valerie Maier, Carolyn Van Pelt**

SCRIPTURE "What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. Or do you think Scripture says without reason that the Spirit He caused to live in us envies intensely? But He gives us more grace." (James 4:1-6)

MAILING ADDRESS PO Box 367
Hutto TX 78634

CUSTOMER SERVICE 877.897.0368
service@hmmag.com
FAX 512.535.1827

EDITORIAL dvanpelt@hmmag.com
MARKETING & ADS jjt@gyroscopearts.com
james@gyroscopearts.com
617.283.7804

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Letters to the Edit

THIS AIN'T SPORTS ILLUSTRATED

Is there any way those of us who are already loyal subscribers can get a hold of the digital sampler given to new subscribers at the festivals. I was totally bummed I couldn't get to any of the festivals this year, and even if I did... I'm already a subscriber! Either way thanks a lot for the quality magazine, I think I beat my record of days that I had read HM cover to cover last issue. Though I missed the devos. Keep the good stuff coming!
–Brandon Landis, via internet

Ed – Sorry, man. That would be like me picking up the phone when I see a Sports Illustrated "subscribe now and get a free team jacket" offer and ask them if I can get the jacket, because I already subscribe. It's a specific offer. I feel ya ... it's frustrating to subscribe and not get every goodie we have, but the goodies are for the purpose of getting action/subscriptions. If you renewed, you could get one. Sorry for saying "no." I hope you can understand.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Hey, I'm a huge fan of your magazine. Love reading it everytime it comes in. I have a question about Blindside. They haven't released anything new in a while, just the re-releases of their Solid State cds. What are they doing now? Are they on hiatus or just spending a ridiculous amount of time working on a new album? I hope they have something new coming out, anyway. Loved almost every album (with the exception of *About A Burning Fire*). Keep up the good work at HM, God Bless.
–Drew Gillis, Conway, Arkansas

Ed – Check out the review on page 25. They've released a new EP called Black Rose ... and it's great. I guess it's an interim project between their last record deal and a new'n.

BEING A X'N MYSELF

I love your magazine. I love what you are doing for the young people of today, and I am glad that you keep me, an "old" person, informed of new, great, awesome music! I have two quick things for you... One, my subscription has not technically run out yet, but I did not receive a password to the new digital issue! I renewed my subscription today; it is in the mail. Will I receive a password soon, or did you need my renewal first? Secondly, I completely understand that you had to cut some features from the latest issue and that truly sucks! However, I wonder if cutting the devotionals and columns, usually found at the end of each issue, was a wise idea?! That may be some kid's only chance at hearing anything about God. Again, I completely understand, I promise... but as we, as you, trust God and spread His truth through your work in HM, it almost strikes me as an oxymoron to cut that section out. Being a x'n myself, I look forward to reading those sections, too, and over the years God has used them to speak to my heart. Please, do not take my comments and questions as ridicule; they are not intended to be so. Just some questions, feedback, and possible food for thought in the future. I love you guys and the work that you do. Keep it up and keep trusting God.
–Brian C. Woodring, via internet

Ed – While figuring out what to cut from the print version was tough, it was cool to know that it'd be in the online/digital edition. It's not like it was axed completely. While the words in this magazine might be used by God to help people, trying to estimate their value in their absence isn't something I think we can do. I'm reminded of what the singer of a current band said to me in Nashville recently. He made a comment about how God's used their albums to help people turn from suicide to Christ. Our negative review of their album might keep that from happening from some kid, because he or she would read that review and not buy it now. I just think that's so much speculation, and playing "What If" with past and regrets like that doesn't seem right.

WHERE IS THAT NOW?

Hey, I was checking out some back issues and I did not see the July 2004 issue #107 listed, but I was wondering if it was possible to get it from you guys? If you had a few copies lying around or if maybe you had suggestions of where to purchase it online or something?
–Ryan Mueller, via internet

Ed – That was a great issue – with Underoath on the cover – but it's all sold-out now. Sorry 'bout that. There's always ebay...

ROXX RECORDS

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The wait is over… Coming this September, Roxx Records has secured the rights to release the long out of print **Eternal Ryte** release ***World Requiem***. The band's debut CD has been a much sought after collectible with collectors paying top dollar for the original release on sites like eBay. Now available for a limited time and in a limited quantity this 2 disc set will feature everything you could imagine from this 80's glam band's history.

The 2 disc set will include the entire ***World Requiem*** release as well as 2 earlier recorded demo tapes. The 6 track ***Anthem*** demo was sold by the band and at shows prior to the release of ***World Requiem***. Also the never before released ***Untitled*** demo, which includes 7 additional never before released songs. If that's not enough you will also get some exclusive LIVE performances captured in the band's heyday.

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